

FROM THE EXILE TO THE CHRIST

EXILE, RESTORATION AND THE INTERPRETATION
OF MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

by

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"I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any University for a degree."

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to demonstrate by critical interaction with four key areas of Matthean research that 'restoration from exile' provides a valid and valuable hermeneutical prism for the interpretation of Matthew's gospel. The investigation is undertaken from a Reformed and Evangelical perspective and an inclusive approach is adopted with regard to hermeneutics, viz that interpretation should take note of the *historical* and *literary* and *theological* aspects of Matthew's gospel. The four key areas of investigation were chosen because they involve both particular texts and the gospel as a whole and are, respectively, Matthew's genealogy, Matthew's concept of Salvation History, the Plot of Matthew's gospel and Matthew's Use of the Old Testament. Each of these areas has already received extensive attention in Matthean scholarship, though in each case the question of 'restoration from exile' has been almost entirely neglected. In each area, a brief critical survey of current scholarship is provided, both in terms of content and methodology. This survey is then followed by a discussion of the relevant texts and topics, demonstrating both the presence and the hermeneutical importance of the 'restoration from exile' theme. In this way, the thesis thus shows that 'restoration from exile' does indeed provide a valid though not exclusive, hermeneutical prism for the interpretation of Matthew's gospel and that such an interpretation casts fresh light on both familiar and more troublesome texts and topics of investigation. The final section of the thesis comprises a brief survey of the theme of 'restoration from exile' within the Hebrew Scriptures and a representative selection of early Jewish texts. On the basis of this survey, the conclusion is reached that despite the very real diversity within early Judaism, it is possible to conclude that perhaps the majority of Jews of the Second Temple Period saw themselves as still 'in exile', at least in theological and spiritual terms. This in turn suggests that Matthew's presentation of Jesus as the one, who by his death and resurrection brings the exile to an end, both for Israel and for the human race at large, is designed to meet a very real spiritual and theological need. Furthermore, the pervasive interest in 'restoration from exile' within representative texts from Second Temple Judaism, and Matthew's clear interest in this same theme, further support claims for the Jewish-Christian setting of Matthew's gospel and its dual function of legitimization for the Matthean communities and evangelistic appeal to outsiders.

Opsomming

Die proefskrif beoog om deur middel van kritiese wisselwerking met vier sleutelgebiede van navorsing met betrekking tot die Matteusevangelie aan te toon dat 'terugkeer uit ballingskap' 'n geldige en waardevolle hermeneutiese prisma bied vir die verklaring van die Matteusevangelie. Die ondersoek word vanuit 'n Gereformeerde en Evangeliese standpunt onderneem. Daar word 'n inklusiewe hermeneutiese benadering gevolg, d.w.s. die *historiese, literêre en teologiese* aspekte van die Matteusevangelie word in ag geneem. Die vier sleutelgebiede van ondersoek is gekies vanweë hulle verband met spesifieke teksverse en die Matteusevangelie as geheel. Die sleutelgebiede is, onderskeidelik, die geslagsregister in Matteus 1:1-17, Matteus se konsep van heilsgeskiedenis, die plot van die Matteusevangelie en Matteus se gebruik van die Ou Testament. Elkeen van hierdie gebiede is in die verlede al breedvoerig deur geleerdes ondersoek, maar die tema van 'terugkeer uit ballingskap' is in elkeen van hierdie areas feitlik totaal verontagsaam. 'n Verkorte opsomming en bespreking van die hooftrekke van die bydraes van geleerdes word vir elk van die vier gebiede gegee, beide met betrekking tot inhoud en metodiek. Dit word gevolg deur 'n uitleg van sleutelverse en relevante temas om beide die teenwoordigheid en die belang van die 'terugkeer uit ballingskap' tema aan te toon. Op dié wyse word daar in die proefskrif bewys dat 'terugkeer uit ballingskap' wel 'n geldige en waardevolle, dog nie die enigste nie, hermeneutiese prisma vir die uitleg van die Matteusevangelie verskaf. Dit is ook duidelik dat so 'n uitleg van Matteus wel nuwe lig op sowel bekende as minder bekende en moeiliker teksverse en temas gooi. Laastens word daar ondersoek gedoen na die belangstelling al dan nie in die tema 'terugkeer uit ballingskap' in die Ou Testament en 'n verteenwoordigende seleksie vroeë Joodse geskrifte. Daar word aangetoon dat ondanks die verskeidenheid van wêreldsienings onder die verskillende Joodse groepe, daar tog 'n algemene beskouing onder die meeste Jode van daardie periode was dat hulle steeds, ten minste in 'n geestelike en teologiese sin, 'in ballingskap' verkeer. Teen hierdie agtergrond is Matteus se voorstelling van Jesus as dié Een wat die ballingskap vir Israel en die mensdom tot 'n einde bring van uiterste belang. So 'n belangstelling in 'terugkeer uit ballingskap' versterk ook verder die siening dat Matteus sy evangelie vir Joodse Christene geskryf het en dat Matteus se geskrif beide 'n legitimerings- en evangeliseringsfunksie vervul.

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Muizenberg

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Chapter 1. Introduction

'The State of Israel will be open for Jewish immigration and for
the ingathering of the Exiles....'

'The Declaration of the State of Israel' (1948)

'Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David;
fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon;
and fourteen from the exile to the Christ.'

'The Gospel of Matthew' (1st cent AD)

1. The Issue

The last ten years have once more cast the reality and horror of exile as sombre shadows across human experience and consequently human history. Millions for whom the experience of the forced displacement of human beings by fellow human beings were just vague pictures in history books of wars now forgotten, were enabled (indeed compelled) by modern technology to watch first hand the horror, the devastation, the empty hopelessness of the victims of ethnic intolerance and international double-dealing. Rwanda, Nigeria, the Balkans, Afghanistan - the list goes on. Of course, the question of forced displacement and the 'refugee problem' are not new - indeed they are, as we shall see, as old as humanity itself. But the latest round have been, certainly for a new generation, a stark reminder that 'deportation', 'homelessness' and 'restlessness' are often the dark meta-narrative of our existence. Of all the stories of *exile* and indeed *restoration* (for sometimes humanity has in a measure succeeded to undo the effects of its cruelty at least on the macro scale for later generations) there is one which stands out in importance for those of a Judaeo-Christian world-view. It is the story of the exile and restoration of the nation of Israel¹, as told in the pages of the Old Testament. There are a number of reasons

¹ Throughout the dissertation, I will use the term 'Israel' and 'nation of Israel' to refer to *l'ancien nation* - Israel as a unity, the inheritor of the patriarchal promises and focus of prophetic hope (cf Hosea 1:10-2:1). Where the kingdom of Israel, as opposed to the kingdom of Judah is in view, unless the context makes it unambiguous, the term will be qualified with the phrases 'northern kingdom of' or 'kingdom of'.

for this.

In the *first* place, as we shall see in a later chapter, it is in a very real sense true to say that 'The Hebrew Bible is the book of exile....From the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden to the moment when exiled Israel prepared to expel itself from Babylonindividuals, families, folk and the people of Judah existed in situations of varying degrees of deportation awaiting possible return....Deportation and diaspora are constitutive of the Jewish identity as it begins to emerge and evolve in the biblical narratives - the Bible is the great meta-narrative of deportation, exile and potential return' (Carroll 1997a:64). Set in the broader context of his other writings,² it is clear that the terms 'exile' and 'return' are used by Carroll in an ideological rather than a historical sense.³ Set in the context of the collection of essays of which it forms a part,⁴ it stands with them as an important reminder of the significance of the themes of exile and return for a study of the Hebrew Bible and thus of the later Jewish and Christian writings which it influenced to such a great degree.

The *second* reason why the story of Israel's exile and restoration should (and does) stand out as important is because of what we may term the 'agent of exile.' Shocking though the forced removals of human beings by their fellow human beings are, they are at the level of theology and theodicy at least, overshadowed by the predominant claim of the Old Testament scriptures that

² See Carrol (1992a: 79-93); Carrol (1992b: 567-576); Carrol (1997b: 84-103); Carrol (1998:62-79).

³ Carroll (1998:62-79) has raised questions about the appropriateness of term 'exile' (and consequently 'return') since in his opinion they represent, at least for modern readers, 'something propounded by a Jerusalem- or Palestinian-oriented point of view and perspective...' and, from a different point of view (say Babylonian- or Egyptian-Jewish), '...life in the diaspora may not have been seen as exilic at all' (:67). This sentiment stands in marked contrast to the twin 'myths' which according to Carroll (1992a) and Barstad (1996) have dominated Old Testament scholarship viz the 'myth of the empty land' and the 'myth of the return'. Neither of these scholars is denying the historicity of deportation or of a return by a group of Judeans in the Persian period, but they are questioning what they see as a prevailing view of Old Testament scholarship regarding (1) Palestine as a *tabula rasa* in the period of the exile, with little or no cultural and religious life and, conversely, (2) the community in exile as the normative community both with regard to theological creativity and subsequent orthodoxy.

⁴ Carroll's essay forms part of a collection entitled *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish and Christian Conceptions* (Scott 1997a). The purpose of the collection is, according to the editor, 'to redress this situation' (that is, the relative neglect of the theme of exile in scholarly work about the formative period in the development of Judaism and Christianity) and 'stimulate further research on the topic' (Scott 1997a:2-3). The collection is of immense value to the student of the various 'conceptions of exile' not least because of its treatment of primary sources and valuable bibliographies. For a parallel project in relation to *exile* and *historiography* see Grabbe (1998).

behind first the Assyrian and then the Babylonian juggernaut lay 'the fist of God'.⁵ It was this *theological perspective of exile* which enabled Israel's theologians and historians to make sense of the loss of the Promised Land and of such institutions as the Temple in Jerusalem. And it was this theological perspective of the exile which enabled Israel's prophets to see a future hope beyond the devastation of this loss, for the hope of return to former glory was intimately connected with a return by the nation to Yahweh.⁶ While such Old Testament claims are not entirely unique amongst extant Ancient Near Eastern texts,⁷ they are striking for the modern Bible reader with our propensity to separate theology, history, ethics and politics into neat 'sacred' and 'secular' categories.⁸

Thirdly, the story of Israel's exile and restoration is important because of Israel's role within the Old Testament as paradigm for humanity. Although Genesis 1-11 provides a backdrop for the 'call' of Abraham and the 'scandal of particularity' which characterises the story of the patriarchs

⁵ See e.g. Deuteronomy 4:23-31; 2 Kings 17:7-20; Jeremiah 1:11-16; 4:5-9; Amos 5:18-27.

⁶ It is striking in this connection to note the 'happy ambiguity' of the Hebrew **שוב** and its cognates. It can thus be used to refer both to Israel's repentance (returning to the LORD) and to their return to the land from which they have been exiled, which the LORD will bring about in the wake of such a repentance (cf. Deuteronomy 30:1-6) (see *NIDOTT* 4:59-61).

⁷ The question of 'History and the Gods' to use Bertil Albrektson's title (Albrektson 1967) remains a disputed question. While Albrektson's work and the various responses (e.g. Lambert (1970, 1972) and Saggs (1978:64-92)) have resulted in a more nuanced conception of the similarities and differences between Israelite and other Ancient Near Eastern conceptions of history, the discussion of details continues (see Walton 1990:111-131). Four examples of possible similarity to what may be summarised as the 'Deuteronomistic perspective on exile and return' can be noted. The *Code of Hammurapi* (reverse xxvi, ll 20-100) threatens 'destruction of his city...dispersion of his people...ruin of his land' for the man (successor) who '....did not read the words which I wrote...disregarded my curses and did not fear the curses of the gods, but has abolished the laws which I enacted, has distorted my words, has altered my statutes' (ANET 178-79). According to line 5 ff of the Mesha Stela Moab 'was humbled many days, for Chemosh was angry at his land' (ANET: 320). In *Erra and Eshum* Tablet III:110-120 we read '....The king of the gods has risen up from his dwelling. So how can all the lands stay firm?' (Halla & Lawson Younger (1997, 1:405)) Finally amongst the Esarhaddon Building Inscriptions (Luckenbill 1927, 2:242-43) we read in connection with the restoration of Babylon of 'the people who dwelt in Shuanna' plundering Esagila, the shrine of Marduk in the city in order to pay for Elamite help in an anti-Assyrian rebellion (Albrektson 1967:91): 'Anger seized the lord of the gods (Enlil) Marduk. For the overthrow of the land and the destruction of its people he devised evil plans....The people living in its midst...having been apportioned to the yoke and the fetter, went into slavery. Seventy years as the measure of its desolation he wrote. But the merciful Marduk - his anger lasted but a moment- reversed and ordered its restoration in the eleventh year.' Perhaps the most striking feature of the Old Testament texts is the sustained warning and appeal to the nation *from within* regarding the reality of exile for disobedience, both in legal / historiographic texts like Deuteronomy and the prophetic oracles. (See Walton 1990:214). The matter, although beyond the scope of this dissertation, warrants further exploration.

⁸ One of the benefits of the recent swing from 'modernism' to so-called 'post-modernism' has been the growing awareness of the need for a more holistic approach to such matters.

(the choice of Isaac, not Ishmael; Jacob, not Esau) and consequently the story of Israel (Exodus 19:3-6), there is a sense in which when we read the Bible from the beginning, the initial perspective we get is *international* and not *national*. Thus the story of the Call of Abram and God's promise to him is encountered as an answer to the problem of humankind,⁹ begun in a Garden (Genesis 3:1-19), resurgent after the Flood (Genesis 8:20-9:28) and reaching its climax in the story of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9). And the focus of the rest of the narrative of the Old Testament seems to be on how Abraham's descendants Israel fulfill their calling (or otherwise) to be a blessing to the families of the earth (Genesis 12:1-3). Thus, as we shall see again later, Israel is created, as are humankind; Israel is given a land, an Eden-like sanctuary over which the LORD himself cares as a gardener; and the people of Israel are promised a blessing (life and rest) if they will obey the command of the LORD whose land it is; but a curse (exile and restless wandering - the 'death' of the nation) if they are stiff-necked and rebellious. In this sense they face the options - obedience and life, rebellion and death which faced Adam and Eve with whom the Bible story begins. If then Israel's exile from the land mirror's humanity's expulsion from the garden, does Israel's restoration offer hope to a humanity 'without hope and without God in the world' (Ephesians 2:12-13)?¹⁰

The *fourth* and final reason why Israel's exile and restoration are of particular importance especially to students of the New Testament, is that it would appear that the language and imagery of those Old Testament scriptures which have particularly to do with that exile and restoration play a major role in shaping the language and thought patterns of the New Testament, particularly the gospels. As the focus of the present work is an investigation into the validity and value of such a claim as far as the gospel of Matthew is concerned, we shall return to this issue again. It is worth noting at this initial stage that the while the study of exile and restoration has been neglected in theological studies of the gospels (see further below), there is evidence of a change in this regard.¹¹

⁹ See Galatians 3:8-9. For a stimulating discussion of 'Paul and the Exile of Israel' in Galatians see Hafemann (1997:329-371).

¹⁰ In this connection the description in Isaiah 55-66 of the creation of a new heavens and a new earth in the context of Israel's restoration from exile is particularly striking.

¹¹ See *inter alia* Wright (1992:372-403); Wright (1996); Evans (1997:299-308); Scott (1997b:173-218); Pate (2000).

2. Background of the Present Study and Formulation of Research Problem:

2.1. Background

The question of Israel's restoration from exile and its relationship to the ministry of Jesus in the preaching of the early church and in particular in the canonical gospels is one with which I was first confronted during the preparation of a series of study notes on the Gospel of Mark.¹² It took the form of a basic question. In what way was 'the beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God' (Mark 1:1) linked to the great restoration prophecy of Isaiah 40, into which context Mark clearly places the preaching and baptism of John the Baptist, the *Elijah-like* messenger of Malachi 3&4? (See Mark 1:2-8). Put more succinctly, in what way, if any, is the *beginning of the gospel of* (ie about) *Jesus* and the *end of the exile* linked?

Closely related to this study of Mark, I had a growing curiosity about the importance of John the Baptist as a reference point for apostolic credentials. In Acts 1:21-22 we read that the criteria for a successor to Judas was that he had to be (δεῖν) 'one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from John's baptism (βαπτίσματος Ἰωάννου) to the time when Jesus was taken up from us.' Even if the phrase *John's baptism* is a reference to Jesus' baptism by John, which it appears to be in the immediate context,¹³ the requirement still focuses attention on the importance of John the Baptist for the apostolic witness. What was the importance of John? As far as Matthew's Gospel is concerned, John is identified first *implicitly* (Matthew 3:4 cf 2 Kings 1:8) and then *explicitly* as 'the Elijah who was to come' (Matthew 11:14). His task is that of a 'voice', a messenger whose role it was to prepare the way (Matthew 3:3 cf Isaiah 40:3; Matthew 11:10 cf Malachi 3:1). The redaction critical questions aside, the two Old Testament quotations applied to John (which are common to all the

¹² Eloff, M. 1991. Read, Mark Learn: Interactive Bible Studies in the Gospel of Mark. Stellenbosch: St Paul's Church Booklets. (Forthcoming: Explore Mark. Cape Town: Whitefield Books).

¹³ Acts 1:5 suggests a broader understanding of βαπτίσματος Ἰωάννου as a reference to John's ministry in general.

synoptics)¹⁴ are indeed striking. The first (Isaiah 40:3) is set against the background of Israel's exile (cf Isaiah 39:1-8) and is, as we have already noted above, the beginning of a great promise of restoration for Jerusalem and the towns of Judah - a restoration involving the forgiveness of sins (Isaiah 40:2) and the coming of the kingdom of God (Isaiah 40:10-11) - a declaration that at last the exile is at an end. The second, perhaps even more strikingly, is set in the context of the historic return and against the backdrop of the Second Temple and yet the language is that of warning in strong terms reminiscent of the prophets who warned of impending exile in preceding generations - far from over, exile seems to be not just a present reality but a future threat for all but the righteous remnant (Malachi 3:1-5;4:1-6) !

It was with these questions in mind that I was struck by Matthew 1:17, the brief summary statement of the genealogy of Jesus, with which Matthew¹⁵ begins his gospel. Three groups of fourteen generations are noted, each with a specific focal point. The first two, Abraham and David, are in accordance with his description of Jesus in vs 1 as 'son of David, son of Abraham'. Thus Matthew places the story of Jesus firmly within Israel's story and in particular within Israel's Messianic expectation.¹⁶ But the third focal point, the *exile* (lit. the deportation to Babylon - μετοικεσίας Βαβυλωνος) is, as N.T. Wright (1992:385-86) points out, not only 'unexpected' but, it would appear, 'crucial' for Matthew. The words μετοικεσίας and μετοικίζω are rare within the New Testament. Five of the six occurrences of the word group refer to the Babylonian exile.¹⁷ Four of these are found within Matthew's genealogy. This certainly seems to support Wright's assertion. But in what way is the exile crucial for Matthew? Wright's answer, drawing on and

¹⁴ Matthew and Luke agree with Q against Mark in the separation of Isaiah 40:3 and Malachi 3:1. All three agree on the change of the LXX μου to σου which, presuming Markan priority, was original to Mark.

¹⁵ The question of the authorship of the Gospel of 'Matthew' remains a disputed one. The issue is not germane to our discussion and thus I will for simplicity's sake continue to employ the traditional title of Matthew's Gospel and refer to the author as Matthew.

¹⁶ For discussion and comprehensive bibliographies regarding Messianic expectation in post Biblical Judaism see Jenni (1962:360-65); Johnson (1988:115-38); De Jonge, M (1992:777-88). Although as Johnson says (1988:116) 'we find in post-biblical Jewish writings three main views of the ancestry of Messiah which seem not to have been mutually exclusive: a Messiah (or Messianic figure) might have been expected from Judah (David), from Levi (Aaron), and from Ephraim (Joseph)' in presenting Jesus as 'Son of David', Matthew is entering into the mainstream of Old Testament and later Jewish thought for the '...emphasis on the Davidic descent of the Messiah ... dominates the later Jewish literature' (Johnson 1988:117 ff).

¹⁷ The other occurrence in Acts 7:4 refers to Abraham's "deportation" to Canaan at God's command.

further developing the insights of Powell (1992a, 1992b),¹⁸ is that Matthew's story is part of a bigger story- the story of the Jews and that according to Matthew, Jesus comes as a new David, bringing resolution to the story of Abraham's people, saving his people from present exile by saving them from their sins (*cf* Matthew 1:21).¹⁹ It is with the **validity** of this claim and its **value** with regard to the interpretation of Matthew's gospel that our present research is concerned.

2.2. Formulation of the Research Problem.

Standing as it does at the outset of Matthew's story, the summary statement in Matthew 1:17 poses a question about the possible significance of *restoration from exile* as a 'hermeneutical prism' by means of which Matthew's gospel may be interpreted. As we have already noted above with regard to Wright's work, such an approach to the interpretation of Matthew's gospel is not entirely novel.²⁰ But it is by no means common, as can be demonstrated by a brief summary of the results of scholarly investigation into three key areas of Matthean study. These areas are (1) the interpretation of Matthew 1:17, (2) 'salvation-history' and its role within Matthew's gospel, and (3) the plot of Matthew's gospel. In each case, we will restrict ourselves in this current introductory chapter only to a summary statement of the more detailed discussion which occurs in subsequent chapters. Further, in the interests of brevity, we will not summarise our findings regarding Matthew's use of the Old Testament at this point. As we will see in due course however, a survey of scholarship with respect to this important topic yields substantially the same results. The topic of exile and restoration is largely ignored, even when the texts from which Matthew is quoting come from an exilic context.

The Interpretation of Matthew 1:17. Two summary observations can be made with respect to the study of Matthew's genealogy in general and Matthew 1:17 in particular. The first is that a great deal of scholarly attention has been paid to this section of Matthew, both in commentaries

¹⁸ For a discussion of the work of Powell and other writers who have applied narrative critical methods to the interpretation of Matthew's gospel see Chapter 4 'Exile, Restoration and the Plot of Matthew's gospel'.

¹⁹ See Wright (1992:385-90). There are some subtleties in Wright's proposal to which we will return at a later stage.

²⁰ See e g in addition to Wright (1992, 1996) the work of William J. Dumbrell (1994); Evans (1997); Pate (2000).

and in monographs and journal articles. The second is that, the comments of Wright (1992:385 ff) noted above aside, *none* of the journal articles, essays, monographs or commentaries consulted give more than cursory attention to the possible significance of Matthew's phrase ἀπὸ τῆς μετοικεσίας Βαβυλῶνος ἕως τοῦ Χριστοῦ for a theological interpretation of the gospel.²¹ In the main, *Source-*, *Form-* and *Redaction-*critical issues predominate, and even where, in the name of a more *holistic* interpretation the genealogy in general and 1:17 in particular are seen as *foundational* for the remainder of the narrative, the possible significance of the *exile* is almost entirely ignored. *Universality* and *Promise* (Son of Abraham and the inclusion of the women), *Christology* (Son of David) and even *Divine Sovereignty* (the significance of 3x14 generations) - all are discussed in detail. But the closest anything comes to a statement of the significance of Matthew's reference to the Christ and the exile is the second 'concluding observation' by Davies and Allison:

Jesus came 'at the right time.' Although the apocalypses of Judaism contain several different outlines of history, Dan 9.24-7; 1 En 93.3-10; 91.12-17; and 2 Bar 67.1-74.4 are at one in placing the epoch of the exile immediately before the epoch of redemption. This is significant because Mt 1.2-17 divides history into periods and places the appearance of Jesus at the end of the exilic era. So the time of the Messiah's birth admirably falls in line with a presumably common eschatological calendar....

(1988:187)

This comes admirably close to recognizing the importance of the exile for Matthew, but with the reference to the 'common calendar' seems at the last also to fall prey to purely *form-* and *redaction* critical concerns. What is even more surprising is that the insight expressed here is not sustained throughout the interpretation of the gospel or the concluding discussion of Matthew's theology. In fact, the concluding discussion is rather tame in this regard. Referring back to the genealogy, Davies & Allison remark:

²¹ Luz (1989:107) states 'Verse 17 accentuates the exile as a break...' and 'the emphatic mention of the Babylonian exile twice...', but the context is his discussion of *Redaction and Tradition* and the observation is not carried further in relation to theology or purpose. Allen (1900:136) has in a brief note a suggestive reference to the didactic character of the genealogy that 'the compiler wished to emphasise the acquisition of royal power in David, its loss at the Captivity, its recovery in the Messiah.' See also Stanton (1988:216): 'there is little doubt that in 2:17-18 Matthew intends to link the story of Jesus with the exodus and exile experiences of Israel.'

There are, to be sure, portions of Matthew which suggest the systematic. At its very beginning the triadically arranged genealogy of Jesus, which we take to be the work of Matthew himself presents a sophisticated interpretation of Israel's history. But this historical schematization is only implicitly theological: It offers no explicit speculation about the meaning and birth of Jesus but a list of ancestors. One would not readily take it to be a theological statement such as one might come across in a treatise in modern theology.'

(1997:706).²²

Indeed not ! But this is rather to miss the point, or in fact two points. First, atomistic treatment of *pericope* will inevitably result in a failure to discern any sort of *theology* within the gospel. The genealogy is, as we shall see, not meant to be read in isolation from the following story of the γένεσις of Jesus, but rather in conjunction with it, each informing the other. Second, Matthew's composition need not bear resemblance to a 'modern theological treatise' to be *theological*. Nor does his presentation of the *historical*²³ dimensions of the story need to share the particular *salvation-historical* categories suggested by some scholars²⁴ in order to be seen as *salvation-historical*. This brings us to the second key area of investigation *viz* that of 'salvation-history'.

Salvation History and Matthew's Gospel. While the question of 'salvation-history' and Matthew's gospel has not received the same amount of scholarly attention as, say, the genealogy, the results of a survey of what study has occurred are nevertheless very striking - perhaps even more so than in connection with the genealogy. I say this because while one could perhaps understand a neglect of the exile in a discussion of Matthew 1:17 or the genealogy because of a focus on other valid details, failure to note what is a key event (perhaps *the* key event) in the story of God's dealings with His people almost defies explanation in the context of a discussion which *by definition* concerns precisely that story. Nor is it a case of simply ignoring one aspect of the

²² See also France (1989:198-200).

²³ Of particular interest here is Matthew's use of the combination ἀπὸ... ἕως in temporal terms (e.g. 1:17; 11:12). Quite apart from the redaction-critical interest, for the usage is distinctively Matthean when compared with Mark and Luke, the terms give us what may be called a 'Matthean salvation-history' as opposed to those which are sometimes appear to be imposed onto the gospel.

²⁴ A three stage history e.g. Strecker (1971); Walker (1967); Meier (1975, 1976) or a two stage one as Kingsbury (1975) and Frankemölle (1974) have proposed.

story which though important, is irrelevant for an understanding of Matthew's presentation of salvation-history. For the exile is mentioned expressly by Matthew and that in a context which suggests its significance for the correct interpretation of the rest of the narrative.²⁵ Thus it is indeed perplexing when scholars such as Strecker (1971, 1983), Walker (1967), Kingsbury (1975) or Meier (1978), who engage with the question of the continuity or discontinuity between Jesus and Israel and identify (albeit in slightly differing terms), a 'time of Israel' (Strecker, Kingsbury) or the *Vorgeschichte Messias* (Walker), then fail to give the attention that Matthew does to this initial epoch²⁶ and even where discussing it, totally ignore the exile. Nor do the advocates of a literary critical approach to the question of 'salvation-history' rise to greater heights, as can be seen from the work of Howell (1990) or Levine (1988). Despite their criticism of *form-* and *redaction-*critical studies of 'salvation-history' in Matthew and their claim to take the final form of Matthew and his own emphases seriously, neither of these scholars so much as mention the exile, even when dealing with the relevant sections of the gospel such as Matthew 1:17 and 1:21.²⁷ Such a neglect is as we noted above quite inexplicable.

The Plot of Matthew's Gospel. Nor, as we shall see, is the situation much better when we turn our attention to the discussion of the plot of Matthew's gospel, though, as in the case of 'salvation-history' one might expect better things in this regard. Indeed, as far as present studies of Matthew's plot are concerned, it is only Wright (1992, 1996) who notes the significance of the exile within Matthew's story of Jesus. In so doing, he not only draws upon, but significantly develops the work of Mark Allen Powell (1990, 1992a, 1992b), one of the leading proponents of *narrative critical* study of the gospels and a Matthew specialist. What makes this even more striking is that Powell himself comes within touching distance of the question of the exile, when he concludes that 'the main plot of Matthew's Gospel concerns the divine plan by which God's rule will be established and God's people will be saved from sin' (1990:49). But what does this

²⁵ See Howell (1990:115-16) for the importance of the earliest sections of the narrative in educating the reader for a correct interpretation. Howell is here following Eco (1979:7ff) and Sternberg (1978:93-94).

²⁶ All of these scholars place the emphasis in their study on the question of the continuity or discontinuity between Jesus, the disciples and the church and thus in the terminology current within the discussion of salvation-history on the so-called 'time of Jesus' and the 'time of the Church'.

²⁷ This omission is particularly striking in the case of Levine who contrary to the predominant view within the discussion of salvation-history argues for continuity not only between Jesus and Israel, but also for the church. See e.g. Levine (1988:1-11, 266, 269).

forgiveness and *rule* actually mean? Powell never really answers these critical questions, perhaps because unlike Wright, he fails to grapple with the *historical* and *theological* dimensions of interpretation and focusses only on *literary* issues.²⁸ Whatever the reason, the recognition of the importance of the exile for a study of Matthew's plot is left to Wright who states in simple yet vitally important terms:

The very sentence which is found to be thematic for the main plot - the prediction that Jesus "will save his people from their sins" - presupposes a previous story as well. It assumes that the plot of the gospel comes toward the end of a larger and longer plot, in which 'his people' fall victim to their sins. It does not take much imagination, much reading in Matthew, or much knowledge of the Jewish background to see what that story is. It is the story of Israel, more specifically, the story of the exile"

(1992:385)

Given the above summary, Wright's reference to the exile as *crucial* for Matthew is striking indeed. And if Wright's claim can be shown to be valid, then the neglect of the exile and its significance for the interpretation of Matthew which we have noted above requires some explanation. The attempt to provide such an explanation involves a careful study of the history of Matthean scholarship and is in itself a major undertaking.²⁹ It requires far more than a mere survey of the way in which Matthew has been approached and interpreted, of the great questions that have dominated the study of the Synoptics in general and Matthew in particular. It also requires some attempt to link these approaches, the agenda they set and the answers they provided to their questions, to the prevailing scholarly *Zeitgeist* if one may call it that. To what degree were these approaches to the gospel of Matthew shaped by the epistemological and hermeneutical presuppositions³⁰ and interests of the day? And in what way are contemporary

²⁸ This neglect tends to characterise so called *narrative critical* approaches, even though the proponents of such approaches pay lip service to the importance of the *historical* and *theological* dimensions of Biblical texts.

²⁹ See *inter alia* Stanton (1983a); Riches (1996); Senior (1996); Kealy (1997).

³⁰ That such scholarship was not devoid of presuppositions need not be debated today. Perhaps the greatest service done for biblical scholarship by so-called *post-modern* approaches to reading and interpretation has been to alert us to the ubiquity of presuppositions and the importance of 'putting them on the table'.

approaches, such as Wright's work, themselves coloured by present debates and concerns? One intriguing aspect of such research would be an inquiry into the task of writing commentaries³¹ and New Testament Theologies and the relationship of such a task to the world of scholarship on the one hand and the confessing church on the other. The *raw materials* for such an evaluative survey are scattered throughout commentaries, Bible dictionaries, journal articles and theological works. They are also woven into the warp and woof of works on NT interpretation and general hermeneutics. The *task* of such an evaluation, except where it relates directly to the matter in hand, must be left for another occasion. One thing seems certain. Given the renewed interest in the Historical Jesus, the fresh approach of Wright to the Jesus of the Gospels and the responses it has evoked from within the scholarly community,³² the task should be an interesting and enlightening one.

In the light of the above discussion we now turn to the so-called *Unit of Analysis* for our present research. This can be described as follows:

An investigation into the **validity** and **value** of *Restoration from Exile* as a hermeneutical prism for an interpretation of Matthew's Gospel

3. Clarification of the Research Problem: Aims and Objectives.

3.1. Aims: In the research, I will attempt:-

- (1) to demonstrate the **validity** of *Restoration from exile* as **a** hermeneutical prism for an interpretation of Matthew's Gospel;
- (2) to demonstrate the **value** of *Restoration from exile* as **a** hermeneutical prism for an interpretation of Matthew's Gospel.

These related questions of *validity* and *value* with regard to our unit of analysis and stated

³¹ See the 1982 issue of *Interpretation* which addresses this very issue. Cf Moore (1989:16).

³² See e.g. the valuable, but in my opinion somewhat acerbic review of Wright's book *Jesus and the Victory of God* by Robert H. Gundry (1998: 76-79). See also the more measured criticisms in Newman (1999).

aims are important, for I am well aware of the fact that when it comes to the formulation of a research proposal, the establishment of research aims and objectives and even the pursuit of the research itself, one inevitably starts with a preliminary viewpoint³³ and initial presuppositions which will influence the angle of attack. I will therefore consider the validity and value of exile and restoration as a hermeneutical key for the interpretation of Matthew's gospel to have been demonstrated if the following research objectives can be attained.

3.2. Objectives:

(1) To demonstrate that *Restoration from Exile* provides a fairly inclusive and simple reading of Matthew's Gospel as a whole. I have opted for the qualifier *fairly* because I am wanting to affirm the complex nature of the Gospels as a construct of historical, literary and theological components. Thus I recognize that despite my attempts to do as comprehensive a reading as possible, some aspects of the text (biographical, structural, redactional) will not necessarily fit within the framework of the reading that I am proposing. Similarly I would want to affirm the presence of a diversity of themes within Matthew's Gospel, rather than argue for the predominance of a particular theme. I would also want to defend the validity of both a *synchronic* and a *diachronic* approach to Matthew's theology.³⁴ However I am aware that questions regarding *methodology* (e.g. Synchronic vs Diachronic approaches) and *unity and diversity* have long been a matter of debate within New Testament Theology (see e.g. Hasel 1991: 72-139; Morris 1986: 9-18). This having been said, it is my opinion that the level of appropriateness and degree of validity of the reading must be judged by the quality and extent of the fit.

(2) To demonstrate that *Restoration from Exile* provides fresh insight into well-known texts or possible solutions to exegetical difficulties, unresolved or inadequately resolved by other

³³ I prefer the term 'viewpoint' to 'hypothesis' since it is reminiscent of the notions of story and world-view, rather than the so-called 'objectivity' of modernist epistemologies.

³⁴ See e.g. Carter (1996:7) where he criticises Luz (1995) for what seems to be methodological inconsistency. This arises because of the latter's cross-sectional approach to Matthew's theology which seems to contradict Luz's declared commitment to have his understanding of Matthew's theology shaped by the flow of the narrative itself. Such questioning at the level of methodological consistency may well be appropriate. And one might well ask about the appropriateness of Luz's method given his reticence to speak of a 'plot' of the Gospel. Or perhaps better, his reticence to speak of 'plot' given his method. But Carter's question must not be taken to disqualify a cross-sectional approach *per se*.

readings. Once again the complexity of the material is an issue and one needs to say that the inability of a particular reading to clarify everything within a set text is not necessarily a disqualification of the reading and its value. Quite the contrary, for even if one in the end chooses a particular interpretation as ‘most appropriate’, others will have served either a contributory role (i.e. adding to one’s holistic understanding of a text) or they will have served as an exegetical and hermeneutical foil against which one’s own understanding can be tested and sharpened.

(3) To demonstrate that Matthew’s interest in exile and restoration fits within the theological *milieu* of the first century Greco-Roman world. To this end we will need to investigate the level of interest, if any, in exile and restoration within a representative selection of Biblical and extra-Biblical texts from the Second Temple period.

In the pursuit of these research objectives, we will begin by focussing our attention on Matthew’s genealogy which, as we shall see later, fulfils a key role in orientating the reader of the gospel. We will then turn our attention to three key areas of interest within Matthean research *viz* Matthew’s view of Salvation History, the Plot of Matthew’s gospel, and Matthew’s use of the Old Testament. Each of these topics has received considerable attention among scholars. Each of them also enables us to focus attention upon key Matthean texts while maintaining an interest in the gospel as a whole. Finally, we will turn our attention to a survey of Old Testament and Jewish literature. This survey of Old Testament and Jewish literature is, as we shall see later, of some importance because one of the foundations of, for example, Wright’s views, is that the Jews of the Second Temple period saw themselves as still being in exile. Whether or not this was indeed the case will have to be carefully considered.

This overall *modus operandi* can be summarised as follows:

- Exile, Restoration and the Genealogy of Jesus ὁ Χριστός.
- Israel, Jesus and the Church: Salvation History in Matthew’s Gospel.
- Exile, Restoration and the Plot of Matthew’s Gospel.
- Exile, Restoration and Matthew’s use of the Old Testament.
- Exile and Restoration: Old Testament and Jewish Conceptions.

4. Central Theoretical Argument

The Central Theoretical Argument of our study is that *Restoration from Exile* does provide a valid, but not exclusive, hermeneutical prism for an interpretation of Matthew's gospel. It serves to enhance and enrich our interpretation of specific aspects of the gospel, casting fresh light on familiar and sometimes troublesome texts and topics of investigation.

5. Basic Presuppositions and Methodology:

In this section, I will attempt to highlight and clarify, in brief, the foundational presuppositions with which I will be approaching the research task and the methodology that I will be following within it. Given the inter-relatedness of presuppositions and methodological choices, I will deal with these in an integrated rather than isolated way. I have, in the interests of brevity, left more detailed discussion of particular methodological issues to the relevant sections of the thesis. I am also very aware that the question of methodology has been discussed at length by scholars, particularly in recent times, and that *inclusivity* rather than *exclusivity* is now largely the order of the day in gospel studies.³⁵

(1) First, I am approaching the tasks of exegesis, interpretation and evaluation which form the substance of this research from within the Evangelical and Reformed tradition. Although I am well aware that the precise theological viewpoints defined and incorporated within these labels are a matter of controversy and ongoing debate (see e.g. McGrath 1994), they remain for me meaningful terms. Thus I would align myself with belief in the *Divine* as well as the *Human* dimensions of scripture and consequently with the *trustworthiness* and *authority* as well as the *historicality* and *contemporary significance* of the scriptural witness. (I am of course aware that the issue of hermeneutics is fundamental to the discussion of scriptural authority, at least as far as theology and the application of scripture is concerned.) At the same time I want to affirm that the task of interpretation is best undertaken *in community*. Therefore I have sought with regard to each area of Matthew's gospel investigated, to articulate my thinking in dialogue with others

³⁵ On the shift in methodology with regard to the study of the Synoptics see the editorial comments in *Interpretation* 46, October 1992 (4):340. See also Beardslee (1969); Moore (1989); Wright (1992:30-144); Stanton (1992a:23-84); Davies & Allison (1988:1-7).

who have written on the topic concerned. In every area therefore I must stand, with grateful acknowledgement, upon the shoulders of others.

Second, I want to affirm (along with other Reformation convictions) a belief in the centrality of Christ, not only for ‘matters touching salvation’ but with regard to the Biblical witness itself and thus with respect to the fundamental unity of the Biblical message.³⁶ This presupposition will inevitably influence my treatment of Matthew’s use of the Old Testament, not least the question of the relationship of the Matthean quotes to their Old Testament context. My general assumption has been that quotations from and allusions to the Old Testament have been used by Matthew in a way which is largely consistent with the original Old Testament context. This is not to downplay distinctive emphases within specific texts or in any way to attempt to ‘smooth over’ biblical-theological diversity, nor am I unaware of the danger of eisegesis in this process. But I do want to attempt to understand texts within the widest possible context and that, in my opinion, includes their canonical context. Whether such an approach can finally be said to enhance our understanding of Matthew’s gospel must of course be demonstrated in the course of the argument and decided by the reader. But it seems to me that given Matthew’s own emphasis on ‘fulfilment’, it is justified.

Third, at the epistemological and hermeneutical level, I want to affirm the importance of the author and the original reader, as well as the importance of a study of the text itself in its final form.³⁷ This is not merely an attempt to have one’s hermeneutical cake and eat it, but rather a recognition that despite the claims of *naïve realists* on the one hand and *phenomenologists* on the other, we can have access to event and meaning in the public domain, though we will do well to bear in mind our own world-view and reading activity.³⁸ Thus, although as we shall see the method is not without its own pitfalls, I consider that aspects of narrative criticism are of real value for the interpretation of Matthew’s gospel. That this should be the case is surely self-evident

³⁶ The question of the relationship of the Testaments remains one of the key questions within debates about Biblical Theology. See Goldsworthy (1981); Reventlow (1986:10-144); Høgenhaven (1988:44-59); Hasel (1991:172-191).

³⁷ The frequently made claim that literary criticism focusses on the ‘final form of the text’ whereas redaction criticism does not, is as we shall see in our discussions, incorrect. Redaction criticism at its best is not merely interested in editorial changes, but the composition of the gospel as a whole.

³⁸ For a detailed discussion of such a critical realist epistemology see Wright (1992); Thiselton (1992); Osborne (1991).

since Matthew has been constructed in narrative form even though its *genre* is a form of *biography* rather than *story*.³⁹ But I do not subscribe to the all too frequent assumption that ‘story world’ and ‘real world’ are mutually exclusive or that the words of Jesus as found in the gospels are merely a vehicle for the ‘point of view’ of the implied author or narrator. The realization that Matthew is not merely a story, but a form of biography must surely confirm this fact. Nor do I therefore consider the sometimes sweeping claims of narrative critics to grant them exclusive, or even priority rights, in the interpretation of the gospels. The traditional pillars of redaction criticism remain intact, despite the need for caution in a number of areas (see Stanton 1992a:28-52). And thus, if applied with care, the method of redaction criticism remains an indispensable tool for gospel interpretation. I consequently take the setting of the original readers of the gospel, however accessible it may be to us or not (*cf* Stanton 1992b:379-82), to have been a significant factor in *Matthew*’s thinking as he composed his gospel. I therefore consider reflection about the possible *socio-rhetorical* and *theological*⁴⁰ impact of Matthew’s gospel on its *original readers* to be a vital first task, to be undertaken before one thinks about the ongoing significance of Matthew’s gospel for contemporary readers. It is for this reason that a survey of the themes of Exile and Restoration within Jewish Literature of the Second Temple period is of importance in addition to our study of these themes within Matthew’s gospel. At the same time however, I do not consider the gospels merely to be a window onto the theology of the evangelist or the situation in his communities. In the gospels, as one would expect from works of a biographical nature and clear historical tone, we see Jesus at work, hear his words and are faced with his death and resurrection as real events, albeit events that are interpreted and applied by the various evangelists.⁴¹

From the above comments, it is clear that I am concerned to attempt as comprehensive and inclusive an interpretation of Matthew’s gospel as is possible. This will mean taking each of the

³⁹ See the helpful and as far as narrative critical methods are concerned, cautionary comments, of Stanton (1992a:59-71). See also our discussion below in connection with the purpose of the genealogy and in the concluding chapter of the thesis.

⁴⁰ Stanton (1992a:41-45) raises the question of whether it is in fact possible to describe the evangelist as a theologian, as opposed to someone whose primary concerns were pastoral and catechetical. But this seems to me to restrict ‘theology’ purely to the realm of the systematic and to ignore the fact that even pastoral or catechetical concerns are, at least as far as Christianity is concerned, ‘theological’ in nature.

⁴¹ One of the key tasks of Wright’s monumental project is as I understand it an attempt to reinstate the gospels as source documents for reflection about the historical Jesus. See also Keener (1999:24-36).

Chapter 2. Exile, Restoration and the Genealogy of Jesus ὁ Χριστός

1. Introduction

Genealogies in the Ancient World vary in both form and function.¹ Regarding the genealogy in Matthew's gospel, there is broad agreement that the form is that of a *linear* genealogy, with some extensions, notably the recurring phrases καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς αὐτοῦ (1:2,11) and ἐκ τῆς Θαμάρ, Παχάβ, etc (1:3,5,6)² as well as the designation τὸν βασιλέα to describe David. But when one turns to a discussion of the details of the genealogy, the relationship between the genealogy and rest of the so-called 'infancy narratives'³ and, in particular, the author's purpose⁴ in all of this, the consensus, if not the discussion, ends rather abruptly.

2. The Current Debate: Outline and Response

The primary questions and proposed answers which form the focus of the discussion in the commentaries and secondary literature are extensive and can, for our purposes, only be listed (together with a select bibliography) and discussed selectively and briefly. They are:

- (1) The source(s) of the genealogy and the related questions concerning *tradition, redaction* and *historicity*.⁵

¹ For a general discussion on the Form and Function of genealogies and historiography in the Bible and the Ancient World see Johnson (1988:3-138); Satterthwaite (1997); Wilson (1977, 1992); Hood (1961:1-8).

² See also the phrase τὸν ἄνδρα Μαρίας ἐξ ἧς ἐγεννήθη Ἰησοῦς (1:16b) which is to be preferred above the textual variant and should be taken as Matthean in form. (See Brown 1993: 61-64; Johnson 1988:184-86; Luz 1989:108 note 29).

³ On the suitability of the term 'infancy narrative' see Brown (1993:25).

⁴ On the possibility of theological function of genealogies 'embedded' in narrative texts see Wilson (1992:929-32) and Robinson (1986:595-608). Johnson's conclusions (1988:3-36) on the *non theological* functions of the written genealogies in the Pentateuch are based on his source critical rather than narrative critical approach to the material. He is however prepared to concede such a function with relation to the genealogies of the Priestly writer and Chronicler (1989:139).

⁵ Brown (1993:69-70, especially the tables on 76-79); Davies & Allison (1988:165-167); Gundry (1994:14-19); Hagner (1993:7-8); Johnson (1988:146-189 especially the chart on p 181; 210-28); Kilpatrick (1946:51-55); Kupp (1996: 159-161); Luz (1989:104-107, especially the footnotes).

(2) The function of the *superscription* Βίβλος γενέσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ υἱοῦ Ἀβραάμ. Does it function as a superscription for the genealogy alone,⁶ or for the Matthean Prologue,⁷ or for the gospel as a whole?⁸

(3) The structural and thematic relationship of the genealogy to Matthean Prologue⁹ and the remainder of the gospel.

(4) The reason for the extensions to the genealogy (see above) notably the inclusion of Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and τοῦ Οὐρῑου (ie Bathsheba) and the consequent link between these women and Mary in 1:16.

(5) The exclusion of names from the second table of the genealogy and the link between this exclusion and Matthew's 'fourteen generations'. Is the exclusion consequent on Matthew's source (possibly a scribal error and thus by serendipity suggesting the pattern of fourteen generations)? Or is it the work of the author and in that way indicative of his purpose?¹⁰

(6) The function of the genealogy as an expression of Matthew's theological purpose and the consequent discussion of the significance of γενεὰὶ δεκατέσσαρες in Matthew's summary statement in 1:17.

⁶ In 1964 Davies could write that this view was held 'by most scholars' ([1964] 189:67). See a very similar sentiment expressed in 1988 (Davies & Allison 1988:149). Thus e.g. Brown (1993:58-59) (see 7.below); Calvin (1972, I:58); Gundry (1994:13); McNeile (1915:1); Tatum (1977:524-26).

⁷ See Bauer (1988:73-77); Carson (1984:61); Kingsbury (1975); Krentz (1964:409-14); Luz (1989:103-104). **Note:** The scholars mentioned do not necessarily agree about the *extent* of Matthew's prologue.

⁸ See Beare (1981:64); Davies & Allison (1988:149-154); Grundmann (1968:61-62) Morris (1992:19) See however the phrase 'with qualifications' (1988:150) and the comment (1988:154) of Davies & Allison which recognizes the possible 'multi-functional' nature of the superscription. See further Davies ([1964] 1989:68); Fenton (1963:36) and the more nuanced approach to the issue in Brown (1993:583-86).

⁹ It is customary for some scholars responding to Bacon (1918) and his followers to point out that the term Prologue (Bacon used the word 'Preamble' for chapters 1 & 2) tends to undervalue the function of the early chapters of Matthew. See e.g. Barr (1976:351); Bauer (1988:32); Kingsbury (1975:4). Our use of the term has the opposite intention - viz to highlight the introductory and formative nature of the early material for an 'ideal' reading of the gospel. See further Gibbs (1973:154); Howell (1990:115-16); Kingsbury (1988:57-58); Waetjen (1976:205-206).

¹⁰ For the former see e.g. Johnson (1988:181-82); for the latter see e.g. Davies & Allison (1988:178-79).

Since these points are inter-related, our discussion of them will be composite, rather than piecemeal. In the light of our earlier comment regarding the extent of the scholarly debate on these issues, the discussion will also of necessity be brief and focus only on the points which are of importance for our overall thesis.

First, concerning the question of **sources** and **redaction** I want to sanction the view that in its present form the genealogy is a Matthean composition.¹¹ This is not to suggest that Matthew did not have or utilise source material in the composition of the genealogy for there is good evidence that he did. It is simply to affirm that from both a literary and sociological point of view, there is good reason to assume that Matthew himself integrated his sources into a unified whole in the service of his overall purpose.

In terms of the literary unity of 1:1-17 it has been noted by several scholars¹² that vs 1 and vs 17 form what Hagner (1993:5) calls a *chiastic inclusio* as follows

Vs 1. Χριστοῦ....Δαυίδ....Ἀβραάμ

Vs 17 Ἀβραάμ....Δαυίδ....Χριστοῦ

In addition to this we note with Kotzé (1977:1-2) that in terms of the formal discourse structure, the noun forms γενέσεως (vs 1) and γενεᾷ (vs 17) form an inclusio for the verbal forms, the collective Πᾶσαι οὖν αἱ γενεαὶ in vs 17 providing a summary of the singulars in vss 2-16. The rhetorical effect of these twin ‘inclusions’ is not just to strengthen the idea of historical progression explicit in vs 17, but also to place emphasis on the title Χριστός as applied to Jesus. This is made clear by the juxtaposed phrase Ἰησοῦς ὁ λεγόμενος Χριστός (1:16) which ends the

¹¹ Luz (1989:107-108) argues that Matthew did not construct the genealogy, but rather ‘had it at his disposal’. This statement is in line with Luz’s overall impression of Matthew as a ‘conservative redactor’ (1989:73 cf Gundry 1994:xiii). Johnson (1988:209-210) argues for Matthean composition on the basis of the ‘Midrashic character of the genealogy’ (cf Box 1905:81-86). See further Allen (1900:135-36); Frankemölle (1974:314); Gundry (1994:13-19); Tatum (1977:526-529).

¹² See *inter alia* Allison & Davies (1988:149); Brown (1993:59 note 1, 587 note 34); Kotzé (1977:1-9 and Addendum)

actual list of ancestors¹³ beginning with Ἀβραάμ in vs 2. We also note the extensions in vss 2,3,5,6,11. Although it has been suggested that some of these can be ascribed to Matthew's source¹⁴ it is better to see them as Matthean. We will return to the compositional significance of these extensions below, but note at this point the minor *inclusio* formed by the phrase καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς αὐτοῦ in vss 2 and 11. This phrase circumscribes both the *included* women and the *excluded* kings of the monarchical list and possibly spans the history of Israel in both its ascendancy and decline. If so, it serves to highlight the μετοικεσίαν Βαβυλῶνος as a *crux historiae* in the story of the nation. This ties in closely with the undisputedly Matthean¹⁵ summary in 1:17 in which the exile is one of the key loci of Matthew's schema (see below). The conjunction οὖν underlines the link between 1:17 and the preceding genealogy and indicates the function of this statement as an interpretive summary of the genealogy.¹⁶ Thus quite apart from any rhetorical or thematic links between the genealogy and the rest of the gospel, the genealogy shows signs of careful crafting in its entirety.

It is of course possible, that such a highly crafted unit came to Matthew in finished form as part of the tradition and was thus simply incorporated into his gospel. But as Gundry (1994: xiii) rightly argues, this seems highly unlikely for there is no 'evidence for communal creativity that is not more economically explained by Matthew's creativity.' Communities, he suggests, tend in general away from creativity towards conservatism. (And, I would want to add, this is even more likely if as most scholars agree, the Matthean community was Jewish Christian in nature, and consequently conservative with regard to sacred writings.) Linking this sociological point, to the literary evidence, he concludes, 'when the products of creativity fit together in a coherent pattern, as they do in Matthew, does not attribution to a single source, seem inherently more likely?'

If one further bears in mind the close relationship between the genealogy and the rest of the

¹³ The fact that we are dealing with a list of ancestors and not descendants explains the use of Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in association with Βίβλος γενέσεως (see Brown 1993:67 and further below).

¹⁴ See Allen (1900:135-36).

¹⁵ See Luz (1989:110); Davies & Allison (1988:165-67); Grundmann (1968:64-65).

¹⁶ Johnson (1988:189-90).

gospel (see below), then the conclusion that the genealogy owes its final form to the author of the gospel seems in my opinion to be well established. This conclusion thus strengthens the idea that the genealogy has a key 'expositional' function for the reader of the gospel.¹⁷ The precise nature of that function is a question which we will consider further below.

Second, concerning the **source** and **function** of the term Βίβλος γενέσεως the following: In the light of the above discussion about the literary design of the genealogy, I agree with Davies and Allison that in terms of source, the title and the genealogy stand and fall together, but for the opposite reason.¹⁸ However, whereas I agree that 'nothing prohibits us from urging that 1.1 be assigned more than one function' (Davies & Allison 1988:154), I cannot concur with their suggestion that Matthew's use of the term is a conscious attempt to portray in his presentation of the story of Jesus the idea of 'new creation'.¹⁹ Most scholars do see a link between Matthew's phrase and LXX of Genesis 2:4 & 5:1 - אֱלֹהִים תּוֹלְדוֹת in 2:4 and סֵפֶר תּוֹלְדוֹת in 5:1 - both translated Βίβλος γενέσεως in LXX.²⁰ But to then argue from this as a possible source for Matthew 1:1 to it as a key to Matthew's purpose, seems not only highly speculative, but contrary to the evidence.

First, as far as the genealogy itself is concerned, apart from the term Βίβλος γενέσεως there is,

¹⁷ See Howell (1990:98-99, 115-16); Brown (1993:69); Gibbs (1973:154-56); Tatum (1977:529).

¹⁸ Davies & Allison argue that since the genealogy is the work of the evangelist, the same is true concerning 1:1 - 'it is redactional' (1988:149). This logic is not conclusive though for Luz (1989:104) takes the title as Matthean, yet discounts the genealogy itself as the evangelist's work. This is because Matthew could well have used a 'pre-Matthean' source for the content of part or all of the genealogy, and still used 1:1 and 1:17 as a framework to link this genealogy into the final work and thus into service of his overall purpose. However the close literary unity and design of Matthew 1:1-17 points to the fact that whatever sources Matthew utilised, the final product is his own carefully crafted work.

¹⁹ See Davies & Allison (1988:150-154); Davies ([1964] 1989:67-70); Morris (1992:19); Beare (1981:64).

²⁰ For a different view see Strack & Billerbeck (1922,1:1) S-B recognise that if Βίβλος γενέσεως is taken as title for the entire gospel then it is likely to be related to סֵפֶר תּוֹלְדוֹת in Genesis 5:1. They however take as more likely ('was das Wahrscheinlichere') that it refers only to the following genealogy and that the phrase is consequently a translation of סֵפֶר הַיְחָשׁ as *eg* סֵפֶר הַיְחָשׁ as in Nehemiah 7:5 or possibly מִגִּלְתָּ הַיְחָשׁ.

unlike Luke's genealogy,²¹ no literary or thematic link with the creation account. The phrase Son of God does not occur in the genealogy and where references to Jesus as Son of God occur in the rest of the gospel they are, as we shall see, either national (Jesus as true Israel - e.g. 2:15; 4:1-11) or titular (Jesus as Israel's true king - e.g. 3:17) or ontological (Jesus as the Divine Son - e.g. 11:27) but never 'Adamic'.²² Second, apart from the repeated use in the genealogy and Matthew 1:18a, the nominal γένεσις or its cognates do not recur in Matthew's gospel. Third, and in direct contrast to the statement that 'Βίβλος γενέσεως is hardly an obvious title for a table of progenitors' (Allison & Davies 1988:150 note 1), I would want to suggest that given Matthew's particular task the term serves his purpose very well indeed.

Matthew faces three challenges in his genealogy. The first is that he must present what is manifestly a Messianic genealogy in a way which is entirely novel in his own time. For as Johnson (1988:208) has said 'the two genealogies of Jesus in the NT are the only extant Messianic genealogies which are written to prove that the Messiah *has come* [italics mine]'. It is this note of fulfilment that causes Matthew to write a table of ancestors not descendants²³ and to eschew the more regular plural formula αὐται δὲ αἱ γενέσεις used elsewhere in the LXX for genealogies. Second Matthew is faced with the theological challenge in 1:16 of describing human descent and supernatural conception. For this purpose the passive ἐγεννήθη (1:16) used in conjunction with γένεσις (*origin* not *birth*! - 1:18a)²⁴ and the phrase γεννηθὲν ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου (1:20) function admirably. But the choice of γένεσις immediately casts Matthew back upon the Βίβλος γενέσεως on Genesis 5:1 as a title for his genealogy. Third while as we have seen above 1:1 & 17 do form superscription and subscription (Tatum 1977:526), the connection with 1:18-25 shows that Matthew does not want to isolate the genealogy from the rest of the gospel.

²¹ Although Luke does not use Βίβλος γενέσεως, he does trace the genealogy of Jesus back beyond Abram to 'Adam, the son of God' (Luke 3:37) and juxtaposes the genealogy with the Temptation narrative in a way which suggests a contrast between Jesus and Adam, the former triumphing over the devil in the wilderness, where the latter succumbed in the garden paradise.

²² See Carson (1984:109-110).

²³ cf Brown (1993:67) *contra* Allison & Davies (1988:150): 'In Christian salvific history there can be no genealogy of Jesus' descendants because history has reached its goal in Jesus.' See also Tatum (1977:529).

²⁴ cf Allison & Davies (1988:198 note 3) and Davies ([1964]1989:69) for a discussion of γεννησις rather than the better attested γένεσις in 1:18a.

The fact that in Genesis 5:1ff, Βίβλος γενέσεως serves to introduce both genealogy and narrative clinches, in my opinion, its use by Matthew as both title for the genealogy and together with the genealogy as an introductory statement for his story of Jesus the Christ, whose genealogy it is.²⁵

Finally, if theological speculation is to occur at all with regard to Βίβλος γενέσεως, then I would venture that Matthew's attention might well have been drawn to Genesis by Mark's initial phrase 'Αρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ and that given his intention, *in the light of his purpose* (see below) to begin his gospel with a genealogical list, the title of LXX Genesis 5 (a linear genealogy with extensions and ensuing narrative) commended itself to him, for the reasons mentioned above. Mark's beginning, however, is quite clearly not related to the gospel as New Creation (as may perhaps be argued for the Fourth Gospel use of the phrase 'Εν ἀρχῇ) but rather to Old Testament prophetic eschatology, and in particular the great restoration promise of Isaiah 40.²⁶ In this sense Mark's 'beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ' is closely linked with the end of Israel's exile. Thus our term would serve to underline Matthew's intention to present Jesus right at the beginning of the story as the Son of Abraham and the Son of David, the Christ through whom Israel's exile was finally brought to an end and the promise to the patriarchs thus fulfilled.²⁷

Third, concerning the **relationship** between the genealogy and the rest of the gospel of Matthew, the case for continuity has been made *inter alia* by Stendahl (1983:56-66); Brown (1993:50-54) and Johnson (1988:210-28) though with different conclusions regarding the nature

²⁵ I cannot concur with Krentz (1964:411); Kingsbury (1975:9-11) and Bauer (1988:73-77) who see Matthew 1:1 as a *superscription* for the first major section of his gospel (ie 1:1-4:16). Although there is continuity between the genealogy and the remainder of what they would term the gospel prologue, the term *superscription* places unnecessary weight on what are primarily *transitional clauses* in the course of Matthew's narrative (viz 4:17 & 16:21).

²⁶ The term Καθὼς in Mark 1:2 joins the quotation with the introductory statement in vs 1. Note also the use of LXX εὐαγγελιζόμενος for the MT מְבַשְּׁר in Isaiah 40:9.

²⁷ I cannot concur with the thesis proposed by Johnson (1988:224-28) that the genealogy and remainder of Matthew 1 are a midrash based on Mark's opening designation of Jesus as Christ, and Son of God. Apart from question regarding the application of midrash to Matthew's exegetical procedure and the textual issue regarding Mark 1:1, it is not at all clear that Mark intended the titular use Son of God as more than a synonym for King (cf Mark 15:39). The implied 'Son of God' motif in Matthew 1:18-25 is also based merely upon the use of κυρίου in the formula quotation. The title itself is absent, as are characteristic *Son of God* Old Testament texts such as Psalm 2.

and extent of that continuity.²⁸ According to Johnson (1988:211 ff), *form* (especially the use of triads²⁹ such as Matthew's 3x14 generations), *language* (both the Old Testament names in the genealogical lists and elsewhere in the gospel and the general use of the Old Testament)³⁰ and *theology* (especially the characteristic Matthean phrase υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ)³¹ all serve to confirm a close continuity between the genealogy and the remainder of the gospel.

That there is clear continuity between the genealogy and 1:18-25 can be seen by the references in both to the nominals Ἰωσήφ and Μαριάμ as well as the references to υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ (1:1; 1:20) and particularly Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ which according to Kotze (1980:7) 'governs both passages being the central concept in the heading of each pericope.' In addition we note the continuity of the *genesis idea* by means of the repetition of the nominal γένεσις (1:1,17 and 18) and the verbal γεννάω (1:2-16 and 20). Here again Kotze is helpful by pointing out that the passive form ἐγεννήθη in 1:16 is 'more specifically interpreted' by γεννηθὲν ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου in 1:20. Thus Stendahl (1983:61) is correct to point to the explanatory nature of 1:18-25 in relation to the *how* (οὕτως) of the γένεσις of Jesus the Christ (his inclusion into the Davidic line, not his birth). But Matthew 1:18-25 does more than merely explain the *how* of Jesus' Davidic lineage asserted in the genealogy.³² The juxtaposition of the personal name 'Jesus' γὰρ σώσει τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν (Matthew 1:21) and the titular 'Immanuel' (1:23 cf Isaiah 7:14) introduces a theological tension when seen in the light of its original Old Testament context and in particular

²⁸ See further Bauer (1988:73-83); Kingsbury (1975:7-17); Luz (1989:118).

²⁹ Allen (1907:lxv); Davies & Allison (1988:86-87); Luz (1989:38).

³⁰ The discussion of the text form underlying a particular New Testament book is a complex matter as is that regarding a particular author's use of the Old Testament. The matter is further complicated by uncertainty regarding the textual tradition of the LXX and the flexibility of specific authors regarding variety of textual traditions. See Wilcox (1988:193-203); Gundry (1967); Stendahl (1968); Longenecker ([1975] 1995); Stanton (1988:205-219). See also our discussion of Matthew's use of the Old Testament.

³¹ Matthew 1:1; 1:20; 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30-31; 21:9,15; 22:42,45. There is little doubt amongst scholars that this title is Matthean as can be seen in instances where Matthew amends his source by adding the title (Matthew 15:22 & Mark 7:24-30; Matthew 21:9 & Mark 11:9-10, Luke 19:38).

³² Luz (1989:118) is also correct to take exception at Stendahl's reference to Matthew 1:18-25 as 'an enlarged footnote to the crucial point in the genealogy' and to point out that it does indicate 'new Christological themes to be unfolded further in the Gospel' (1989:121). The Christological themes that Luz has in mind are (1) that 'the son of the virgin is the Son of God' (1989:121) and (2) 'that the earthly one is no other than the exalted one who is "with" his community' (1989:122-23).

in the light of the underlying literary and thematic unity of Isaiah 7:1-9:7.³³ In its immediate Old Testament context, *Immanuel* is a title symbolic of the impending darkness of exile on the unbelieving house of David.³⁴ If Immanuel is judgement, then how can it be applied to Jesus who will 'save his people from their sins' (Matthew 1:21)? The answer, in Isaianic terms, is found in 9:1-7, where we are told that the darkness of exile will give way to the light of restoration through forgiveness - and that again through a child being born. This child will be a 'son of David' (Isaiah 9:7 *cf* Matthew 1:1,20), but he will be more, for he will be called 'Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace' (Isaiah 9:6). God will once more be present with His people in and through a son of David, through whom, as promised, God's kingdom will be established (*cf* 2 Samuel 7:13-14). 'Immanuel' as sign of judgement for unbelieving Israel, will once again become a symbol of hope for those who will repent and believe. What is striking then, though seldom remarked upon,³⁵ is that just as Matthew 1:18-25 clarifies 1:16, so Matthew 4:15-16 clarifies the application of the Immanuel title to Jesus who is the saviour of his people in 1:21. Matthew 4:12-16 should thus be read, together with the intervening material (2:1 - 4:11), in thematic unity with 1:1-23. In the light of the underlying theme of Divine Kingship in Isaiah 9:1-7 it is thus also not surprising that what follows Matthew's quotation of Isaiah 9:1,2 is a statement (Matthew 4:17) that Ἀπὸ τότε ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς κηρύσσειν καὶ λέγειν, Μετανοεῖτε.

³³ See Oswalt (1986:192-95). In this section of Isaiah, in addition to the emphasis on children (Shear-jashub in Is 7:3; Immanuel in 7:14, 8:10; Maher-shalal-hash-baz in 8:3; Isaiah's children in 8:18 and the Royal child in 9:6) there is also a repeated emphasis on the house of David (Isaiah 7:2,13,17; 9:6-7).

³⁴ Ahaz is a member of this house of David which, in its ideal form, is to be representative of God's rule (*cf* Isaiah 6:1-4; 8:21; 9:6 *cf* 2 Samuel 7:5-16). But in the case of Ahaz, failure to trust the LORD and to obey the word of the LORD in the mouth of His prophet incurs the real threat of subjugation to the king of Assyria, the very one in whom Ahaz is placing his trust. The result of this unbelief is that Assyria will sweep down upon Judah with devastating consequences. For unbelieving Ahaz and the house of David whom he represents, God is present as Judge. In that context, 'Immanuel' which ought to be a sign of hope for Israel, becomes a sign of impending judgement (Isaiah 8:1-8) and the personal name of the child who symbolises this reality is given as Maher-shalal-hash-baz (Isaiah 8:1 *cf* 8:18). For many this desperate darkness of judgement will be the last word as they turn away from and indeed curse 'their king and their God' (Isaiah 8:21-22). But for some darkness will turn to light as the Lord almighty acts in faithfulness to his ancient promises (Isaiah 9:6-7 *cf* 2 Samuel 7:10-16). For these, beyond the judgement (and indeed through the agency of judgement *cf* Isaiah 1:27) there will be salvation and a return for the remnant (*cf* Shear-Jashub Isaiah 7:3; 8:18 - note the plural children).

³⁵ Krentz (1964:413-414) refers to the unity of Isaiah 7:1-9:6 almost in passing as corroboration of his conclusions regarding Matthew's prologue reached on other grounds. See also the very suggestive comment by Cope (1976:9): 'there are structural relationships between some of the OT citations and the material which surrounds them.' See further the comments by Stanton (1988:216).

ἡγγικεν γὰρ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.³⁶

Fourth, concerning the **extensions** to the genealogy, the following viewpoint may be tentatively advanced among the many others that have been proposed as an explanation both for the inclusion of the women and the exclusion of the kings in the second table of the genealogy. We begin by recalling our earlier reference to the minor *inclusio* formed by the phrase καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς αὐτοῦ in vss 2 and 11 and the fact that circumscribes both the *included* women and the *excluded* kings of the monarchical list which makes up the second table of the genealogy. Although as Allen (1912:2) has suggested it is possible to ascribe the first of these to the influence of the LXX 1 Chronicles 1:34 from which ‘the compiler borrows Ἰούδα ...and then summarises the brethren whose names are given there as τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς αὐτοῦ’ such a proposal does not fit the repetition of the phrase in vs 11, except if one interprets the name Ἰεχονίαν to be a reference to Jehoiakim whose brothers are mentioned in LXX 1 Chronicles 3:15. This view has of course been suggested as a solution to the lack of a 14th name in the third table, Ἰεχονίαν being interpreted as Jehoiakim in Matthew 1:11 and Jehoiachin in 1:12. This would then require us to see the beginning of the exile according to Matthew as the deportation of Jehoiakim mentioned for example in 2 Chronicles 36:6-7. There are however three difficulties with this theory. First, it violates what appears to be the pattern of repetition in Matthew’s genealogy - Ἀβραάμ (twice in vss 1-2 end of superscription, beginning of table 1); Δαυὶδ (twice in vs 6 - end of table 1, beginning of table 2); Ἰεχονίαν (twice in vss 11-12 - end of table 2, beginning of table 3). Second it requires both historical knowledge and hermeneutical sophistication on the part of the reader to read the same nominal as two different references. Third it is in fact in contrast to the LXX of 1 Chronicles 3. In this list both Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin are mentioned but it is Jehoiachin who is singled out with the description Ἰεχονία-ασιρ (LXX) (MT 3:17- יְחִיָּזָה אֲסִיר - Jehoiachin the captive. If, as Allen *inter alia* has suggested, the LXX of 1 Chronicles underlies Matthew’s genealogy, it is likely that he took his schema of David the king to Jehoiachin the exile from

³⁶ Combrink (1983:80) in his outline of Matthew’s narrative structure, thus quite understandably includes Matthew 4:17, as ‘a hinge, terminating the setting, while at the same time introducing the body of the narrative.’ In agreement with Combrink then, I will view the so-called ‘setting’ of Matthew’s plot as 1:1 - 4:17, giving full weight to the *inclusio* Μετανοεῖτε ἡγγικεν γὰρ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν (3:2; 4:17) but at the same time treating 4:17 as a ‘hinge’ - a temporal transitional clause providing the ‘subject’ of the participle περιπατῶν in the next section of the narrative in 4:18-25.

there, with Matthew's emphasising phrase τὸν Δαυὶδ τὸν βασιλέα a summary of 1 Chronicles 3:4 where the focus is placed on David's reign.

Taking the reference in vs 11 to be to Jehoiachin, who had no brothers, we interpret the phrase τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς αὐτοῦ to be a deliberate literary *inclusio* designed by Matthew to underline a key Old Testament theological tradition, viz the Unity of all Israel, both at the nation's inception (the twelve tribes with Judah singled out because of Matthew's interest in Davidic Messiah) and at the effective demise of the nation with the loss finally of Davidic sovereignty at the time of the Babylonian exile, the Northern kingdom already having fallen.³⁷ This would of course place Abraham, Isaac and Jacob outside of Israel's nationhood in the strict sense, but this is not inconsistent with their pre-Exodus role as bearers of the Ancient Promise and thus the foundation of the nation. If this was Matthew's intention it would have certainly been controversial, especially for those who viewed Abraham as the 'father of the nation' (cf Matthew 3:8). But it does help to explain the rather curious fact that in all the post-genealogical references to Abraham in the gospel, Matthew seems to be ambivalent to Jewish national exclusivity as far as a relationship with God is concerned.³⁸ Put in other terms, the reference to Jesus as the Son of Abraham has more to do with the inclusiveness of the ancient promise in Genesis 12:1-3, than Jewish exclusivity.

This theme of *inclusiveness* may explain the reference to the four woman in the genealogy, all of whom are as we have seen mentioned within the scope of the minor *inclusio* τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς αὐτοῦ. If, as has been suggested, the emphasis is placed upon the Gentile descent / association of certainly Rahab and Ruth, possibly Tamar and Bathsheba (described by Matthew as τοῦ Οὐρίου) then their mention in the genealogy will strengthen the notion of the inclusion of outsiders found elsewhere in the gospel. Their mention in the genealogy will thus be associated

³⁷ Nolan (1979:117) concurs with the 'unity of Israel' idea but relates it to a recollection of the corporate unity of Israel 'at the two periods of persecution and diaspora (Egypt in 1:1 and Babylon in 1:11).' See further Green (1975:52); Johnson (1988:151-52).

³⁸ See Matthew 3:9; 8:11. The third of the references in Matthew 22:32 is directed in a more narrow sense against the teaching of the Sadducees, but the wider context is that of conflict between Jesus and various groups within Judaism (Matthew 21:12-26:14) and contains some of the strongest polemical language in the gospel.

more with Jesus as Son of Abraham, than the later reference to Mary.³⁹ However, the view of Johnson (1988:176-77) that the women were mentioned because of the place they had within Jewish polemic regarding a Davidic Messiah has much to commend it, even if one does not follow his conclusions. Dogmatism should be avoided in the matter. A similar hesitance about dogmatism should apply to the kings *excluded* from the second table. One tempting possibility in the light of our above reference to the *Unity of all Israel* is the fact that three of the kings excluded (if one rejects the notion of scribal error) were the victims of death at the hands of their fellow Israelites; the antithesis of the unity of Israel - but the reasoning breaks down in the case of Jehoiakim. It is perhaps best just to see the exclusions as determined by Matthew's chosen numeric structure, rather than determinative of it,⁴⁰ the particular reason for the kings chosen being undisclosed by the evangelist. It is difficult enough to be clear about Matthew's intention on the basis of what he has included; it is well nigh impossible to do so on the basis of what he has left out.⁴¹

Fifth and finally, we come to a consideration of the **purpose** of the genealogy and its numeric **structure** as reflected in the summary verse Matthew 1:17. We have already noted the general agreement that this summary owes its origin to Matthew. As such and in view of its summary nature it is also of importance for understanding the central theme(s) of the genealogy. These in conjunction with the position of the genealogy at the beginning of the gospel will give us some insight into the purpose of the genealogy as part of the gospel.

First we note that although the *subscription* in 1:17 does not formally repeat the two primary titles of Jesus found in the *superscription* (*viz* υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ and υἱοῦ Ἀβραάμ) it does nevertheless underscore them by the repetition of the names Ἀβραάμ and Δαυὶδ. The only title found in 1:17 is the emphatic term τοῦ Χριστοῦ, used here without the personal name Ἰησοῦς (1:1,16) and thus

³⁹ Mary is mentioned in the genealogy, not for polemical reasons but because given Jesus' supernatural conception but human birth, Matthew has no option but to mention her. The question of moral dilemma is not mentioned until 1:18-25. However the use of the stylised phrase ἐκ τῆς in association with the women and Mary, may indicate that there is an intentional link between Mary and the other women mentioned.

⁴⁰ Johnson (1988:181-82); Luz (1989:107 note 2) suggest that the omission of the three kings between Ἰωρὰμ and Ἰωαθὰμ was due to scribal error caused by the form of the OT text. This may be the case but it does not explain the exclusion of Jehoiakim. See also Waetjen (1976:207); Goulder (1974:229).

⁴¹ See the comment by Johnson (1988:146).

clearly titular. Taken in conjunction with the emphatic τὸν βασιλέα in 1:6 and the descriptive ὁ λεγόμενος Χριστός in 1:16, the term serves thus to emphasise the *Christological* orientation of the genealogy,⁴² stressing in particular the identity of Jesus as *Messiah ben David*.⁴³ Such a Christological emphasis within the genealogy was as Johnson (1988:116-20) has pointed out, certainly in keeping with contemporary Jewish speculation about the ancestry of the Messiah, quite apart from its function in relation to the remainder of the gospel. As such the genealogy would also have had a significant role within the overall 'legitimizing' function that the gospel might have performed for the Matthean communities (cf Stanton 1992b:388-89). (See further below).

Second we note the juxtaposition in 1:1 of the titles υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ and υἱοῦ Ἀβραάμ. Although the absence of the conjunction καὶ is not syntactically determinative this juxtaposition may well have struck those readers of Matthew familiar with the Old Testament traditions as significant. There is little doubt that Matthew's use of the term υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ served to recall the promise of 2 Samuel 7 which was a major influence on later Davidic Messianism. The main elements of this promise were:

- (1) a great name (vs 9).
- (2) a place for Israel as a home of their own in which they will be free from oppression (vs 10-11).
- (3) rest for David, as for Israel (vs 11).
- (4) a house i.e an offspring for David, the temple builder whose kingdom will be established for ever (vs 11b-16).

Taking the term υἱοῦ Ἀβραάμ for the moment as recollective of the foundational patriarchal promise in Genesis 12:1-3 we note the following elements:

⁴² See Kingsbury (1997:1-39); Nolan (1979:114-240); Luz (1989:108-109).

⁴³ This viewpoint is further emphasised if the number fourteen in Matthew's scheme is indeed a *gematria* on the Hebrew name David, but is not dependent on it - in fact, quite the reverse. See Hood (1961:10); Nolan (1979:59-60); Carson (1984:69) and especially Davies & Allison (1988:161-165).

- (1) A command to leave and the promise of a land (vs 1).
- (2) A great nation and a blessing (vs 2a).
- (3) A great name and a blessing (vs 2b).
- (4) Vindication, protection and mediation (vs 3).

If we further bear in mind that in Genesis 1:1-2:3 the notion of blessing and rest are closely related to one another in relation to God's purpose for creation (see esp 1:28; 2:2-3: cf 2 Samuel 7:28-29) and trace the development of the Patriarchal promise in the Genesis narrative, then, despite the differences, there are striking similarities between these two promises. In both the recipient is promised a great name and rest / blessing. In both a place and rest / blessing for Israel is secured, prospectively of course in the case of Abram. In both the idea of establishment is present, with Abraham in terms of blessing for the nations; with David in terms of God's presence (the temple) and mediated rule (note the conjunction of God's House and David's house in 2 Samuel 7:13). The juxtaposition of the names υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ and υἱοῦ Ἀβραάμ in Matthew 1:1 and the lineal relationship between Abraham and David which the genealogy portrays thus suggest that Matthew may well be stressing the relationship between these formative Old Testament promises. Thus whereas the reference to Abraham in the genealogy remains representative of the *inclusiveness* of the Matthew's gospel, the link with the son of David implies that this ancient promise will be fulfilled (a key term for Matthew) both for Israel and the nations **via** the son of David, and in this way alone. To put it in different terms: the only way to share in the blessing promised to Abraham, now that Jesus has come, is through Jesus the Son of David. It is this note of fulfilment in Jesus that in my opinion is depicted in Matthew's threefold division of fourteen generations - an opinion underscored if one bears in mind the contextual context of the genealogy.⁴⁴

Despite the various attempts at explanation of the significance of the numeric, consensus remains elusive. However, as far as the overall achievement of the genealogy is concerned, there is greater agreement. In the words of Nineham (1975:429):

⁴⁴ The genealogy stands at the head of a collection of stories in which the theme of fulfilment is very prevalent. Matthew 1:1-4:16 contain no less than seven of the so-called *formula quotations*. Although the word πληρωθῆ occurs only four times, the idea is prevalent throughout the section. Note for example the very striking phrase Τοῦτο δὲ ὅλον γέγονεν ἵνα πληρωθῇ in Matthew 1:22.

Whatever the precise background or significance of the number symbolism here - and the question is a much disputed one - Matthew clearly attached great significance to it, and there can be little doubt what, in broad terms that significance was. I can hardly improve on W.D. Davies⁴⁵ statement of it: "The genealogy is an impressive witness to Matthew's conviction that the birth of Jesus was no unpremeditated accident but occurred in the fulness of time and in the providence of God who overruled the generations to this end, to inaugurate in Jesus a new order, a time of fulfilment." As Matthew saw it, history was under the direct and detailed control of the divine providence, and in that providential scheme the call of Abraham, the accession of David and the Babylonian exile and the return were pivotal points of great significance.

Whatever one concludes regarding the number *fourteen* or Matthew's favourite triadic form, it is according to 1:17 primarily the deliberate order and symmetrical structure of the genealogy which is significant.⁴⁶ The repetition and placement of the term γενεαὶ δεκατέσσαρες highlights the symmetrical periodicity and historical progression within the genealogy. Together with Πᾶσαι οὖν αἱ γενεαὶ at the start of 1:17, it also draws attention the to threefold temporal construction ἀπὸ....ἕως as follows:

Πᾶσαι οὖν αἱ γενεαὶ
 ἀπὸ Ἀβραὰμ ἕως Δαυὶδ
 γενεαὶ δεκατέσσαρες
 καὶ
 ἀπὸ Δαυὶδ ἕως τῆς μετοικεσίας Βαβυλῶνος
 γενεαὶ δεκατέσσαρες
 καὶ
 ἀπὸ τῆς μετοικεσίας Βαβυλῶνος ἕως τοῦ Χριστοῦ
 γενεαὶ δεκατέσσαρες

⁴⁵ Davies ([1964] 1989:73). For similar conclusions see Johnson (1988:207-208); Luz (1989:108); Hagner (1993:7); Tatum (1977:528-29).

⁴⁶ One rather obvious but nevertheless important observation is that if Matthew had primarily *symmetry* in mind, then the fact that there are only 14 names in the full list between Abraham and David, would automatically determine the structure of tables 2 & 3. I am assuming along with Hood (1961:10) that Ἰεχονίας is counted again at the beginning of the 3rd table. Hood gives no reason, but I would suggest that such a course is suggested by the 'new beginning' implied in the phrase Μετὰ δὲ τὴν μετοικεσίαν Βαβυλῶνος. See also Davies & Allison (1988:161-65); Hagner (1993:5-6).

ἀπὸ.... ἕως is a characteristically Matthean construction⁴⁷ and it is as we shall see in the next chapter, important for an understanding of Matthew's concept of 'salvation history'.⁴⁸ Thus for example in Matthew 11:12-13 we are presented with two epochs: ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν ἡμερῶν Ἰωάννου τοῦ βαπτιστοῦ ἕως ἄρτι and the period ἕως Ἰωάννου. The former period is the period during which the kingdom advances, the ἄρτι being concurrent with the speaker Jesus' narrative present (see Καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε ἐτέλεσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς in 11:1 and Τότε ἤρξατο ὀνειδίζειν in 11:20). The latter period is the period during which 'all the Prophets and the Law prophesied' (πάντες γὰρ οἱ προφῆται καὶ ὁ νόμος...ἐπροφήτευσαν).

The *loci* of the historical epochs in Matthew 1:17 are Ἀβραάμ, Δαυὶδ, τῆς μετοικεσίας Βαβυλῶνος and τοῦ Χριστοῦ. But the pivotal point of each epoch is that associated with ἕως ie Δαυὶδ, τῆς μετοικεσίας Βαβυλῶνος and τοῦ Χριστοῦ respectively. The use of the title υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ in the wider context (e.g. 1:1,20) suggests as we have seen that David is mentioned because of the promise of 2 Samuel 7, rather than because as some have suggested, Matthew saw David's reign as the highpoint of the monarchy. There is in fact evidence in the gospel that Matthew concurs with the Chronicler and the Deuteronomist in seeing Solomon's reign in that light.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, because of Matthew's preference for the title υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ the first epoch, which extends from patriarchal promise to fulfilment in the Davidic kingdom, ends with David not Solomon.⁵⁰ The second epoch covers the decline not merely of the nation, but also of the royal

⁴⁷ That this construction is distinctly Matthean can be seen from a comparison with the other synoptics (Luz:1989:55) In the majority of cases the construction has a temporal function - 1:17; 11:12; 23:35 (?); 27:45.

⁴⁸ The term *salvation history* is entirely appropriate to a discussion of Matthew's gospel for as 1:1-25 shows, Matthew is interested both in the 'story of Israel' (1:17) and the salvation of Israel from sin (1:21). What must however be avoided is the imposition of classical *salvation historical* categories upon the work. The conclusions we draw about Matthew's concept of salvation history must be the product of *exegesis* not *eisegesis*.

⁴⁹ Matthew 1:23; 12:42; 21:12-17 cf 1 Kings 1-10; 2 Chronicles 1-10. The key thing to note is that according to Exodus 29:46 the goal of the Exodus was that God should dwell in the midst of His people. According to both Kings and Chronicles this goal was fulfilled during Solomon's reign when the glory of the LORD filled the Temple in Jerusalem (1 Kings 8:10-20; 2 Chronicles 5:11-6:11). Also note the role of 'wisdom' in both form and substance throughout Matthew. Despite the greatness of Solomon, the end of his rule was marked by decline. Jesus, the Son of David is not equated with Solomon but described as one greater than Solomon, whose wisdom astonished the crowd and silences his opponents (e.g. Matthew 21:1-22:45).

⁵⁰ The post-Christian haggadic passage in Exodus. Rabah. 15:26 (196-8; on Exodus 12:2) divides the generations from Abraham to the exile into two equal parts according to the pattern of the phases of the moon. It sees Solomon as the highpoint of the first period, with fifteen generations from Abraham (who 'began to shine')

line of David until its virtual demise at the time of the exile. Although the seeds of this decline were sown at the end of Solomon's life (*cf* 1 Kings 11), it is with the division of the kingdom in the days of Rehoboam that the decline gathers momentum until, despite attempts at reformation, the kingdom of Judah falls to the power of Babylon. It is striking that in 2 Chronicles 6 & 7 both Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple and the LORD's response contain the threat of exile and the hope of restoration. Thus if the first epoch is described as a progression from *promise to fulfilment of promise*, the second can be described in terms of *decline and the fulfilment of God's threat*. But this decline and ultimate exile raises questions about God's promise of restoration. Is there any hope beyond the exile? The third epoch of the genealogy, ἀπὸ τὴν μετοικεσίαν Βαβυλῶνος ἕως τοῦ Χριστοῦ, answers this question in the affirmative. Although it is clear from the phrase Μετὰ δὲ τὴν μετοικεσίαν Βαβυλῶνος that Matthew is aware of a historic return from Babylon, the final epoch in 1:17 has its focus not on that historic return, but rather on the coming of the Christ (ἕως τοῦ Χριστοῦ) as the time of completion and fulfilment. This is surely because after the exile no son of David, not even Zerubbabel who was clearly viewed as a key figure of hope (*cf* Zechariah 4:1-14), actually ruled in a way which could be said to have fulfilled the promises made by the prophets regarding a restored Jerusalem, a rebuilt temple and a righteous and just king ruling as God's anointed representative.⁵¹ This fact is underlined by the sheer obscurity of the names⁵² in the third table compared to those in the first two. But Matthew's term ἕως τοῦ Χριστοῦ shows that with the advent of Jesus all of this is about to change - the time of waiting is over, the time of fulfilment

to Solomon (when 'the disc of the moon was at its fullest'). 'Henceforth the kings began to diminish in power' until 'with Zedekiah, of whom it is written: 'Moreover he put out Zedekiah's eyes'[Jeremiah 29:7], the light of the moon failed entirely.' (Quoted in Johnson 1988:197-98). If the author of this passage had chosen David and Jehoiachin as loci, we would have had exactly Matthew's 14 generations from Abraham to David, 14 generations from David to the exile ! If Matthew was aware of such a scheme, his answer to the question 'Who makes peace for Israel since then?' would be found at the end of the third group of 14 generations - 'Jesus who is called the Christ.'

⁵¹ We will return to this fact again in our discussion of Old Testament and Jewish conceptions of Exile and Restoration.

⁵² Johnson (1988:179) refers to this third table as 'unknown names' between Ζοροβαβέλ, and Ἰωσήφ. (*cf* Davies & Allison and Brown who refer to this list as 'post-monarchical Davidids'). The title reflects Johnson's conclusion (1988:180) that although the 'names in Matthew 1:13-15 are found in the late writings of the OT while three of the ten were used among the Jews in Egypt during NT times....The evidence does not appear to allow a definitive conclusion regarding the currency of the names in Palestine at the time of the writing of Matthew's gospel. Neither can we isolate any general characteristic of the names, although several were priests in the OT text. In short, the names remain Jewish, but otherwise unknown..'

has come. If this is indeed correct, then the final epoch is a progression *from exile to restoration*, first for the Royal line of David, and then for all who in submission to the Son of David, will come to share in the blessing and rest of His rule (*cf* Matthew 11:27-30; 28:18-20).⁵³

3. Conclusion

It remains finally and in the light of the above discussion to ask what *purpose* the genealogy fulfills as part of Matthew's gospel.

First, we note the comments of Robert Wilson (1992:931) that, 'in contrast to the multiple functions of segmented genealogies, linear genealogies have only one: to ground a claim to power, status, rank, office or inheritance in an earlier ancestor', though he goes on to point out that once genealogies have been set in a new literary contexts it is not always possible to recover their original purposes accurately. The closing caveat suggests that perhaps the question of the purpose of the genealogy should be pursued purely on literary critical grounds and, as we shall see below, such methods do contribute to our understanding of the function of the genealogy. But it is still possible and indeed necessary to enquire into the socio-historical function of the genealogy as part of the gospel. And this brings us back to the much debated question of the setting of Matthew's gospel and the abovementioned situation of the Matthean communities. As far as the latter is concerned I concur with the mediating view of Stanton (1992a:124, *cf* 1992b:379-91) that 'Matthew's communities have parted company with Judaism and that the Gentiles have been accepted...but they are still responding in various ways to local synagogues and they still hope that even if Israel has been rejected by God, individual Jews will be converted'.⁵⁴ For such communities, Matthew's use of the genealogy to link Jesus to the

⁵³ The following comment by Craig Evans (1997:326-27) is worth noting by way of summary: 'The word 'exile' appears twice...as a pivotal point in the 'messianic genealogy'. Fourteen generations lead up to the Babylonian exile, fourteen generations follow it leading up to the birth of the Messiah. The Matthean genealogy may have been intended to suggest that the exile did not really come to an end until the appearance of Jesus, the Davidic Messiah. Although it is a post-Easter reflection, it may be rooted in a pre-Easter belief that as the Davidic Messiah Jesus would deliver Israel from its exile. If so then we have further evidence of exilic ideas in the theology of Jesus and his followers.'

⁵⁴ See also Hill, (1972:41); Moule (1981:124-28); France (1989:108). See however the comments of Davies & Allison (695-96) regarding caution about the description 'separation from Judaism', though I do not agree with their conclusions regarding continuity between Matthew's communities and the 'parent body'. Perhaps all such formal structural talk is inappropriate to describe what was doubtless a multiplex and

Abrahamic promise (see below), to the salvation-history of Israel in both its rise and fall, and particularly to the Davidic line and the hope of restoration by means of a Davidic messiah would, in my opinion, have provided on the one hand a clear claim that the story of Israel had in fact found its fulfilment in the advent of Jesus and thus those who were associated with him, and yet, on the other hand, stood as ongoing appeal to those within the synagogue to acknowledge Jesus as the Christ and to find their 'rest' in him (cf Matthew 11:28). In short a legitimating function, but not in an exclusivist way.⁵⁵

Second and closely related to the above, there is the question of the genealogy's function in relation to the biographical nature of Matthew's gospel. That Matthew can in fact be described as βίος has recently been argued by *inter alia* Burrridge (1992) who concludes that 'while they may form their own subgenre because of their shared content, the synoptic gospels belong within the overall genre of βίολι.'⁵⁶ Stanton (1992a:59-71) has furthered this discussion with respect to Matthew, first by noting the description of Matthew by early readers such as Justin Martyr and secondly by noting Matthew's treatment of his primary sources Mark and Q. Stanton's conclusion is that 'in his combination, revision and extension of them Matthew has written a gospel which is even closer than Mark to the Graeco-Roman biographical tradition' (1992a:69). Despite Luz's claim (1989:44-45), the genealogy at the beginning of the book does not negate this *biographical* dimension of Matthew's gospel, nor establish that of Frankemölle's view of Matthew as a kerygmatic work of history.⁵⁷ If anything the presence of the genealogy would for a Jewish audience have established levels of expectation that this particular piece of biographical writing was of salvation-historical significance. In other words, it seems to me that, in keeping with the subgenre shared with Mark, Matthew is telling a story about Jesus which is both biographical and salvation-historical. And this is no surprise given Matthew's description of

transitional social situation. In my opinion, Stanton has the truth of the matter with regard to a separation between 'church' and 'synagogue' Contrary to Saldarini (1994), I thus prefer the designation 'Jewish-Christian' to 'Christian -Jewish'.

⁵⁵ As can be seen, for example, from the *Damascus Document* or the *Rule of the Community*, separation from the existing structures does not necessarily imply a refusal to admit those who 'see the light' and are willing to shift loyalty and association.

⁵⁶ See also Shuler (1982); Aune (1987:46-76); Riches (1996:28-32); Keener (1999:16-24).

⁵⁷ Frankemölle (1974) See further Chapter 3: Salvation history in Matthew's gospel.

Jesus as the one 'who will save his people from their sins.'

This brings us *thirdly* to the question of the genealogy's function within the overall literary structure of Matthew's gospel. Whatever one's conclusions regarding the extent of Matthew's prologue or the overall structure of Matthew's gospel, there is in my opinion no doubt in the light of the continuity between the genealogy and the rest of the gospel that the genealogy fulfils a key role as part of the prologue to the rest of Matthew's narrative about Jesus. Gibbs (1973:154) has identified three functions of such prologues:

- (1) The prologue functions as a precis of the remainder of the gospel, and thus it includes a guide to the structure of the gospel.
- (2) The prologue also functions, so to speak, as a table of contents which indicates, either explicitly or implicitly, the major themes and motifs of the gospel.
- (3) The prologue provides the setting or frame of reference in terms of which the whole of each gospel is to be understood.

While we have not spent time pursuing point (1), we have seen that at the very least in terms of the emphasis on Jesus as son of Abraham and son of David, Matthew is introducing into his genealogy themes which do recur within the rest of the gospel and are significant for an understanding of its plot. But the same can be said for the theme of restoration from the exile which Matthew has clearly seen as important enough to include both in the genealogy and in the summary statement in 1:17. And this in turn has important implications for point (3) and what might be termed the *hermeneutical* value of the genealogy. And it is here that our earlier point about the *expositional* function of the genealogy must be explored further.

In the course of his discussion of 'Plotted story and Narrative World' in relation to Matthew's gospel, David Howell (1990:98-99) has noted that 'the reader, as an outsider, must be introduced to what may be a strange and alien world.' This, says Howell, is accomplished through 'exposition' whereby the narrator of the story provides the reader with 'the general and specific

antecedents indispensable to the understanding of what happens in it.’⁵⁸ According to Howell (1990:98-99) ‘The genealogy of Jesus...which opens Matthew’s Gospel should be considered expositional in this sense, because Matthew uses it to place his story of Jesus firmly in the history of Israel and thus establish one of the temporal coordinates for the narrative world projected by his Gospel. In this way the genealogy lays the basis for the repeated references to the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy...which are the evangelist’s primary device for anchoring his story to the past history of Israel.’ In these comments, Howell pre-emptes the views of *inter alia* Wright (1992:385-86). He continues by pointing out that with ‘the Old Testament formula quotations Matthew presents Jesus as the fulfilment of Israel’s Messianic hopes, and of God’s plan to save his people.’ While I will argue in a following chapter that this is certainly true with regards Matthew’s use of the so-called formula quotations, it seems to me that Howell claims too little for the genealogy itself. Matthew’s genealogy with its references to Abraham, David the king and the exile presupposes a certain amount of reader competence and on the basis of that creates a certain level of reader expectation. But by bringing these three important elements of Israel’s story into relationship with the story of Jesus, Matthew by means of the genealogical form and the use of the titles Son of David and Christ, proceeds to educate his readers with regard to how they are to think about the Jesus who forms the focus of his story. It is Jesus, Jesus the son of Joseph and Mary (1:16) - later identified as Jesus the Nazarene (2:23)- who is the one in whom Israel’s story from Abraham to David to the exile and beyond will find its resolution. For it is in Jesus that the promise to Abraham and David find their fulfilment. But what exactly does that mean? The other key component of Matthew’s genealogy is the reference to the exile and it is here that Wright has seen beyond Howell. For, as we shall see in the following chapters, Jesus is the fulfilment of Israel’s Messianic hopes precisely *because* he is the one who brings Israel’s exile to an end by saving his people from their sins. But there is more, for by ending Israel’s exile Jesus also opens the way for the nations to share in God’s saving work. Thus Jesus the son of David is also true son of Abraham in whom all the families of the earth will be blessed.

⁵⁸ Howell is here quoting Sternberg (1978:1). See also Chatman (1978:67).

Chapter 3. Israel, Jesus and the Church: Salvation History in Matthew's Gospel

1. Introduction.

The question of salvation-history in Matthew's gospel is at its heart a *theological* question for it primarily concerns the matter of significance. In what way does Matthew's gospel address its readers, whether they be the original readers of the Matthean community or the present day reader who approaches Matthew as part of a canonical text or out of interest in its story of Jesus? How is the reader *included* in the gospel? This question regarding 'inclusiveness' was the key catalyst for salvation historical studies of Matthew within the context of redaction criticism.¹ It also lies at the heart of more recent literary critical studies which emphasise both narrative critical and reader-response methodologies to interpret what has been called 'Matthew's inclusive story' (Howell 1990:14). Two primary questions face the person who seeks to investigate the idea of 'salvation-history' and its value or otherwise for the interpretation of Matthew's gospel. The first question is *conceptual* and concerns the matter of definition. What exactly is meant by the term 'salvation-history' both in general terms and more specifically in relation to the way the term is used in studies of Matthew's gospel. The second question is *methodological* and concerns the way in which the idea of salvation-history has been applied in redaction-critical studies of Matthew's gospel and criticised in more recent literary approaches. This methodological question has two components to it. The first concerns the more general issue of the relative strengths and weaknesses of redaction critical vs narrative critical and reader response methodologies. The second, which is of course closely related, concerns the value or otherwise of salvation-history as a 'conceptual framework' to enable readers to locate themselves with regard to Matthew's gospel and to appropriate and apply its message for their own situation.

2. The Conceptual Issue: Defining Salvation History

We begin our investigation of 'salvation-history' and its application to Matthew's gospel with the question of definition. What exactly is meant by the term 'salvation-history'? Nor is this

¹ See e.g. Strecker (1971, 1983:67-84); Barth (1963:111); Walker (1967); Thompson (1974:243-62); Kingsbury (1975:25-37); Luz (1983:98-128).

a question whose answer can simply be taken for granted for as Donald Senior has recently pointed out: 'the term 'salvation-history' is somewhat vague and subject to many interpretations....' (1996:39).² Senior's own definition is based on that of John Meier (1979:30 *see below*) and describes salvation-history as 'a faith perspective' in which 'the believer looks back at the flow of historical events and detects a pattern which helps shape a religious consciousness of the present' (Senior 1996:39). In the words of Meier:

By salvation-history we mean a schematic understanding of God's dealings with men that emphasises continuity-yet-difference. Insofar as the theologian, reflecting on saving events, sees one and the same God acting faithfully and consistently within the flow of time, he perceives continuity, a basic horizontal line (though not always a straight one). Insofar as the theologian sees the different ways in which God acts at different times and the different ways in which man responds, he perceives the lines of demarcation which delimit the distinct periods of this history - the vertical lines of division as it were. Difference within continuity, the various stages within the one divine economy: this is the basic insight on which any pattern or outline of salvation-history is built.

(1979:30).

From the above definitions, we see that for both Senior and Meier, salvation history is to be seen as a 'schematic understanding' ie as a *historical-theological framework* by means of which the 'believer or theologian' (in this case of course the evangelist himself) is enabled to understand God's activity in the past and discern the relevance of that activity for the present (in this case Matthew's own community). Just how this definition works in practice can be seen by briefly surveying a few of the more significant salvation-history schemas which have been suggested for Matthew's gospel. This will be done under the commonly accepted classification of Tripartite and Bipartite schemes.

² Part of the reason for this semantic confusion is the fact that the English term 'salvation history' is a rendering of the German *Heilsgeschichte* a term which is more nuanced than its English equivalent implies at face value. The German *geschichte* in this compound usage can mean 'history' (in the referential sense) but it can also mean 'story.' See further Terrell, P *et al.* 1988. *Geschichte*. Collins German-English / English- German Dictionary. 8th Reprint, 293. London: Collins. See also Zieffle, H.W. 1992. Dictionary of Modern Theological German. 2nd edition, 110. Grand Rapids: Baker Book house.

2.1. Tripartite schemes of Salvation-History

According to **Georg Strecker** (1983:67-84)³ 'Matthew's understanding of history presupposes the change in theological situation which took place around the turn from the first to the second Christian generation' (:69). Fundamental to this change was the question of 'how the problem of the delay of the *parousia* should be met and how the originally eschatological conception could be fitted to the fact of continuing history' (: 69). To this problem, so the theory goes, a variety of solutions were offered which resulted in turn in the growth of what became known as 'early catholicism'.⁴ According to Strecker, 'the redactors of the synoptic gospels had a hand in the beginnings of this movement...in the sense that they presuppose an awareness of the delay of the *parousia* as a fact, and have drawn consequences from the changed theological situation by their new orientation in history' (:69-70). History has come into focus and an account must be given not only of the future but of the past, and it is this *historical endeavour* which characterises Matthew's redaction of his traditional material. There is thus what Strecker calls 'a theological-historical background' to the synoptic redactions,⁵ a background which is manifested within Matthew's redaction of the tradition by three identifiable processes.

First, says Strecker, Matthew *historicizes* (1983:70) the traditional material. This is evident from the fact that Matthew has (1) 'extensively amplified the outline of temporal references that he found in his sources', for example, by adding the genealogy and infancy narratives to the basic Marcan outline and by inserting into his gospel 'at characteristic points the chronological formula *apo tote...*', (2) modified originally *topological ideas* so that they 'become geographically

³ For our current discussion we will focus our attention on Strecker's treatment of 'the concept of history in Matthew' (Strecker 1983). This essay is a distillation of aspects of Strecker's major work *Der Weg der Gerechtigkeit* and has its primary focus as the title suggests on the question of salvation-history. We will discuss Strecker's larger work in more detail as part of our discussion of Matthew's use of the Old Testament.

⁴ The preamble to Strecker's analysis of the concept of history in Matthew's gospel with its reference to the emergence of early catholicism is an indication that Strecker is approaching his study of Matthew's gospel from within the perspective of a *religionsgeschichtliche* approach to New Testament theology. See further the criticism of Howell (1990:69-70).

⁵ cf Strecker (1971:47): 'Das bedeutet, daß die Frage nach der theologischen Konzeption des Matthäus die Frage nach dem Verhältnis des Historischen und Eschatologischen in der Redaktion des ersten Evangeliums ist'.

limited', (3) employed a series of formula quotations which designate that the promises of God have found fulfilment in the *life of Jesus*⁶ and (4) included within his gospel certain specifics such as the limitation of both Jesus' own proclamation and the proclamation of the disciples during Jesus' lifetime, to the 'lost sheep of Israel' (Matthew 10:6, 15:24) and the subsequent broadening of the mission to include all nations after the resurrection. From this historicizing process, says Strecker, one can deduce 'how Matthew understood history and which historical aspect he followed when historicizing the traditional material.' The evangelist conceived the course of history 'as a sequence of periods. The central epoch of history is the 'time of Jesus' the time when Jesus is sent exclusively to the people of Israel. The disciples are part of this epoch.'⁷ 'The time of Jesus is preceded by a time of preparation, which like the period of the fathers and the prophets, points forward to the life of Jesus.'⁸ This time 'has ended with the life of Jesus, involving the rejection of Jesus' call to repentance and the loss of Israel's priority in *Heilsgeschichte*.' The time of Jesus is then followed by the time of the Church, the time of world mission, an epoch which will be marked not only by mission but also by 'a time of extreme tribulation, of false prophecy, persecution and temptation...characteristics which are already present in the time of Matthew's community' and which will last 'until the eschaton breaks in' (1983:73).

Second, Matthew has 'submitted the traditional material...to an *ethicization*' (Strecker 1983:74). That this is the case is evident, (1) from the fact that a comparison of Matthew with 'the Q material attested in Luke' shows that 'Matthew has combined the sayings material into five blocks of speeches and has underscored them in the framework of his gospel with five similarly composed formula.' This shows that 'according to Matthew's understanding, the time of Jesus is the time of proclamation, in which the ethical demand is raised', an ethical demand which 'the period prior to Jesus had as its aim, for the people of Israel had rejected the demanding will of God proclaimed by the Old Testament prophets.' And it is from this period 'that the time of the

⁶ Cf our discussion of this point under Matthew's use of the Old Testament.

⁷ Compare Luz (1983:98) who applies the principle of 'transparency' to argue for continuity between the disciples and the Matthean community. See also Kingsbury (1975:25-37).

⁸ According to Strecker this preparation occurs not only through instruction via Torah and prophetic proclamation, but also by being the period 'when the call of the prophets is rejected and the prophets murdered' (1983:73). (See Matthew 23:29-39).

Church can be understood' for this time 'follows upon the time of Jesus and his ethical proclamation' as can be seen from the 'the demand to observe all the commandments of Jesus' teaching and the promise that the exalted *kyrios* will be present in his community' (Strecker 1983:82 note 29). The fact of this ethicization is also evident (2) from the fact that 'in Matthew's presentation of the life of Jesus...he modifies the traditional material in a practical-ethical sense', for example, the apparent mitigation of the judgement on divorce (Matthew 5:32, 19:9) or oath-taking (5:37) and in 'Matthew's tendency to express the ethical demands with formulae which set forth principles' (Strecker 1983:74-75). When one enquires into the motivation behind this ethical demand of Jesus, it becomes clear that Jesus' ethical demand arises from the primarily *eschatological direction* of his teaching (Strecker 1983:76). Like John the Baptist, Jesus announces the Reign of God and the consequent impending judgement, with the result that Jesus' ethical demand can also be termed an 'eschatological demand'.

Third and finally, Strecker turns his attention to the question of the Church's 'function' within 'a course of history thus conceived', a question which emerges primarily because 'the interest of the redactor is directed to the past, to the time of Jesus' (1983:77). Here we are of course confronted with the question of *significance* and *inclusion* to which we referred briefly in the introduction and which we will discuss further below. According to Strecker the answer is found by noting that 'to Matthew's interpretation of history in terms of 'historicization and 'ethicization', there corresponds an 'institutionalization' or 'ecclesiasticalization' of the traditional material. This can be noted by (1) evidence within Matthew of church officials among whom the position of the scribe was especially esteemed (*cf* Matthew 13:52; 23:34), (2) a specific perspective on discipline which is *eschatologically shaped* (Matthew 18:15 ff) and (3) a specific 'presentation of the sacraments' which 'also corresponds to the institutionalization of the community's life' (1983:78). In the light of these, 'the function of the Church within Matthew's concept of history becomes evident: the Christian Church represents the ethical demand in time. By proclaiming this demand the Church guarantees the continuity between the past time of Jesus and the present up to the final goal of history, which will be reached in a near or far future.' Thus the Church 'points the way that individual Christians have to go within the

changes of the times' (1983:79).⁹

Through the process of redaction and on the basis of his criteria of *historicization*, *ethicization* and *institutionalization* Matthew has, according to Strecker, offered 'an independent theological view' - a view 'which is represented by a complexity of different theological conceptions', a view which sets out 'the heightened responsibility of the individual towards the eschatological-ethical demand of the times' (1983:79). Here then, in language drawn from Matthew 24, is a final resolution to the delayed parousia - to understand the times (cf Matthew 24:43) and to respond appropriately to the times in life and mission (Matthew 24:9-14), for 'he who endures to the end will be saved' (Matthew 24:13).

For **Rolf Walker** (1967), Matthew's 'salvation-history' is in reality a 'mission history' ie a history of God's call (cf Walker 1967:117) first to Israel and then, in the wake of Israel's rejection of God's call in Jesus, to the nations. In the words Bauer (1988:50) describing Walker's view of Matthew: 'The Gospel of Matthew is...a kerygmatic history book, providing an etiology for the Gentile mission with which his church was so well acquainted' (cf Walker 1967:10-11, 114-20, 145-49). The 'setting' for this 'salvation-historical presentation' of the life of Jesus by the evangelist is the post AD 70 Gentile mission (cf Walker 1967:114-115), a mission within which Matthew's community must still grapple with the reality of the fate of national Israel as far as the call of God is concerned (1967:49, 115-116; cf Howell 1990:65). Indeed, the fact of Israel's demise and the consequent 'call in all the world for all the Gentiles' (1967:115) marks a transition to the 'last days', the time from within which the evangelist writes. For Walker then, Matthew's salvation-history can be seen in two ways. On the one hand there is a *vita Jesu*, prefaced with a *Voorgesichte des Messias* beginning with Abraham and evident in the genealogy, on the other there is a '*Apostelgeschichte*', in which the period of Gentile mission is in view and which has as its terminus '*des Parusie des Menschensohnes*' (1967:115). The nett result of this combination of a life of Jesus and apostolic history within the one gospel is that Matthew's schema of salvation history can be set out in 'three major sections' viz (1) the pre-history of the Messiah, (2) the history of the call of Israel and (3) the call of the Gentiles. The

⁹ See also Strecker (1971:219) - 'Die gemeinde des Kyrios ist die legitime und zuverlässige Repräsentanz der eschatologischen Forderung in der Welt.'

pivotal point for the shift from Israel to the Gentiles is the destruction of the Temple in AD 70 (cf Matthew 24). But the *Mitte der Zeit* as far as God's redemptive plan is concerned is in fact the mission to Israel with Jesus as 'die *'Mitte der Mitte'*', so that the central epoch can itself be sub-divided into *the time of John the Baptist*, *the time of Jesus*, and *the time of the disciples up to AD 70*. Prior to AD 70, the church's mission is directed primarily to Israel (cf Matthew 10:6) a point of view which, in my opinion, is difficult to maintain in the light of Matthew 28:16-20.¹⁰ After AD 70, the rejection of Israel as a nation is final (cf Matthew 21:43) and the Church's mission to the Gentiles becomes the locus of God's saving call.

Seen against the background of his introductory remarks (1967:9-10), it is clear that for Walker 'the drama of the Gospel' is indeed 'a representation of salvation history' (Howell 1990:63) in which salvation has indeed passed from the Jew to the Gentile, but in that order. Four distinct steps can be traced in this transition:¹¹ First, the earthly ministry of Jesus which confirms his Messianic identity is restricted in principle, if not in every detail, to Israel. In this primary task, the disciples share in Jesus' exclusive ministry (Matthew 10:6; 15:24 cf Walker 1967:60-63, 128). Second, the repeated offer of grace in Jesus the Messiah is repeatedly rejected by Israel (e.g. Matthew 22:1-10; 23:37 cf Walker 1967:55-59). Third, 'Israel is in turn rejected by God and loses its place in salvation history' (Howell 1990:63) (e.g. Matthew 22:7; 23:38). Fourth, the church which is drawn predominantly from the gentile world, *replaces* Israel in salvation history (e.g. Matthew 8:5-12; 21:41-43 cf Walker 1967:49). For Walker, the conflict between Jesus and Israel, epitomised by his conflict with the religious leaders who function as the nation's representatives (1967:11-38), remains fundamentally *historicized* and is thus not representative of the conflict between Matthew's community and the Jews. The point of *inclusion* for Matthew's community comes in that they form part of that Gentile mission, both by having entered into the grace of God by responding positively to the message about Jesus and submitting themselves to 'all that he has commanded' and by being part of the ongoing mission to make disciples of the nations.

¹⁰ Walker deals with this problem by seeing Matthew 28:16-20 alongside of 'Matthew's dual emphasis within the story of Jesus on Israel's rejection of Jesus and the favourable response of the Gentiles' (Senior 1996:40 cf Walker 1967:120 ff) as signals of this future Gentile mission.

¹¹ See Howell (1990:63) for a summary of this fourfold presentation. See also Walker (1967:9).

According to **John Meier** (1979:30) 'Salvation-history is the tool Matthew employs to formulate his higher synthesis, his new vision meant to help a once narrowly Jewish-Christian church over the rough ground of transition. Remodelling salvation-history allows him to remodel the gospel's message.' Thus while for Strecker and Walker the impetus for Matthew's salvation historical redaction is the need to *historicize* the Jesus tradition in the light of the new perspective regarding history, the eschaton and the Gentile mission, for Meier it is the sociological tension created within a church in transition - the challenge of continuity and discontinuity, of tradition and *new life* having to cohere (1979:27-29). Given that salvation-history is precisely 'a schematic understanding of God's dealings with men that emphasizes continuity-yet-difference' (Meier 1976:22), it then becomes the ideal 'hermeneutical key' by which Matthew can 'preserve yet reinterpret strict Jewish-Christian tradition for his changing community' (1976:23). Here again the notion of salvation-history as an extra-textual framework by which the text is shaped and should thus subsequently be interpreted, is clear (cf Howell 1990:65-66).

According to Meier (1979:30), the 'main lines of Matthew's remodelling of salvation-history can be grasped by a comparison of three key texts - 10:5-6; 15:24; 28:16-20 - all of which appear only in Matthew's gospel.' These three texts provide Meier with a starting point for his study of salvation-history within Matthew for they not only belong to 'Matthew's special material', but also provide an example of how Matthew has both *preserved* 'two expressions of the same tradition' (πρὸς τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἀπολωλότα οἴκου Ἰσραήλ) and *worked them into* his gospel (1976:27). The fact that 'the very same persons (the Twelve/Eleven) who were previously forbidden to evangelise the Gentiles and the Samaritans are now solemnly commissioned (by the same person who issued that prohibition) to extend their activities to all nations' is clear evidence of 'Matthew's intention to set up a schema of salvation-history on the basis of a limited ministry to Israel that is broadened (after the death-resurrection) to all nations' (1976:28). This schema then provides a 'working hypothesis' for Matthew's salvation-historical strategy. Two other dicta however also serve to shape Meier's understanding of Matthew's method. The first of these is that within Matthew 28:16-20, the universal mission can be seen to be 'dispensing with circumcision' (1976:28); the second is that the death-resurrection of Jesus is presented within Matthew's gospel in *apocalyptic* and *eschatological* terms, so that the death-resurrection should be seen as 'basically one event' which serves as the 'eschatological turning point', *die Wende der*

Zeit (1976:30-37).¹² On the basis of these three dicta then, Meier can summarise his basic understanding of Matthew's redactional and salvation-historical strategy as follows: 'Mt has 'apocalyptised' the basic kerygma of Jesus' death and resurrection. This explains why the limitations of territory, nation and Mosaic Law should be observed during the public ministry of Jesus, while all these restrictions fall away after the death resurrection, after the enthronement of the Son of Man (which is not coterminous with the complete ending of the old aeon). These restrictions belonged to the old economy, the old aeon, and have been transcended for the believing disciple..' (1976:38). This salvation-historical perspective thus helps Meier to propose an answer for what he considers to be the key issue for Matthew's *church-in-transition* namely the place of the Law in the Christian life.

2.2. *Bipartite schemes of Salvation-History*

A fourth example of a salvation-historical analysis of Matthew's gospel is the work of **Hubert Frankemölle** (1974). The term 'salvation-history' is in fact a bit of a misnomer when applied to Frankemölle's work as he himself eschewed the label *Heilsgeschichte* for Matthew's theology and used the designation *Geschichtstheologie* (1974:7 note 2). According to Frankemölle, Matthew was not interested in history *per se* but rather in presenting what he describes as a *kerygmatisches Geschichtsbild* (1974:398), a kerygmatic portrait of history similar to that found in the work of the Chronicler and the Deuteronomist. Matthew's interest is thus not in a 'life of Jesus' as such, but rather in the present situation of the church. This can be seen from the fact that Matthew's redaction is aimed at 'de-historicizing' both the narratives and the speeches in the tradition, the very opposite of Strecker's claim (*cf* Frankemölle 1974:349, 388). Furthermore, Matthew eschews the idea of historical epochs, working rather with the concepts of 'prophecy and fulfilment'. The result is 'a literary and theological document in which the

¹² Here then is a significant difference between Meier and Strecker / Walker since the latter view the whole Life of Jesus as the *Mitte der Zeit* along lines similar to that proposed by Conzelmann in his study of Luke's theology. (*cf* Conzelmann 1954:146) Meier's argument for taking the death and resurrection as 'single-event' in an eschatological sense has much to commend it. However, it is dependent in a measure on methodology. Thus as we shall see elsewhere, a case can be made from a narrative critical perspective, for viewing the death of Jesus in particular as the point of conflict resolution within the plot of Matthew's gospel. Perhaps in both cases an awareness of the potential of *methodology* to *shape conclusions* needs to be kept in mind. A more serious criticism of Meier's thesis is the claim that the eschatological turning point within Matthew's gospel comes with the advent of John the Baptist and Jesus and the proclamation of the Kingdom of God as imminent (*cf* Walker 1967).

exalted Lord, who is identical with the earthly Jesus, directly addresses the evangelist's community in its own time' (Howell 1990:78). The need for such an address lies in the crisis of faith brought about by Israel's rejection of its Messiah and the consequent destruction of Jerusalem (Frankemölle 1974:1-6, *cf* Bauer 1988:51). Do these events mean that in practice God's promises have failed or are untrustworthy? Matthew's answer to his community is a resounding 'No'! God's purposes which have been faithfully brought to pass in the history of Israel, continue in and through Jesus Christ (1974:387ff). What is more, they are fulfilled within the new covenant community which is the church, the replacement of Israel in the purposes of God (1974:7-82, 309). God's covenant (*Jawebund*) has found fulfilment in the church of Christ (*Kirche Christi*) and Matthew has taught this to his community by presenting *Bundestheologie*, a 'tradition-historical' account of a largely fictitious life of Jesus¹³ in which the narrative and speeches echo the narrative / speech complexes in Deuteronomy¹⁴ and lead up to the Passover meal and death of Jesus, which are of course interpreted by Matthew in new covenant terms. Thus for Matthew, God who dwelt with ancient Israel but has rightly abandoned her because of her unbelief, has now, in the wake of the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, come to dwell with his church in the person of Jesus, the exalted Lord (Matthew 1:23; 28:20 *cf* Frankemölle 1974:321-25). The community's response to this reality must thus be to submit to the words of the earthly Jesus which are the testament of Jesus¹⁵ and which, because of Matthew's method of de-historicization, function as abiding kerygma for the church.

According to **Jack Kingsbury** (1975:25-39), both the 'fivefold' and 'twofold' formulae which describe Jesus 'as 'finishing' a discourse or as 'beginning' a new phase of his ministry, evince temporal movement and therefore direct attention to the chronological dimension of the

¹³ According to Frankemölle, what Matthew has in fact done, is to project the problems of his community back into his story of Jesus, so that the community is *included* into the fictitious past within the Gospel narrative. *cf* Frankemölle (1974:349): '*fiktiv spricht Jesus zu seinen Jüngern und zum Volk seiner irdischen Wirksamkeit, faktisch angesprochen aber ist - wie feststeht- die Gemeinde des Matthäus am Ausgang des ersten Jahrhunderts.*'

¹⁴ According to Frankemölle (1974:335-42) there is close correspondence between the speech complexes in Deuteronomy and those in Matthew, a point which is apparently made clear by noting the similarity between Matthews practice of ending the discourses with a set formula and a similar pattern in Deuteronomy (Deuteronomy 1:1; 4:44; 28:69; 33:1,24; 32:44-45). The speeches in Matthew should thus be seen as 'departure speeches' (*cf* Bauer 1988:51).

¹⁵ '*Das Testament des Herrn für seine Gemeinde für die Zeit nach seinem Tode*' (Frankemölle 1974:338ff).

gospel' (1975:25). This chronological dimension has resulted in a number of scholars identifying the concept of salvation history as the principle according to which Matthew has organized his gospel.¹⁶ Kingsbury thus sets out 'to review the explanations these commentators give of Matthew's concept of salvation-history', 'to propose an alternative explanation' and finally to 'show how Matthew relates the topical outline of the Gospel...to his concept of salvation-history' (1975:25).

Kingsbury raises two fundamental objections to the work of scholars such as Trilling, Strecker and Walker. In the first place he questions whether *ecclesiology* 'is the element that can be said to control Matthew's scheme of salvation-history and therefore the structure of his gospel'; second, he questions whether it is indeed 'accurate to argue that he [Matthew] divides the history of salvation into three epochs' (1975:27). In keeping with the methods of *composition criticism* Kingsbury does show a sensitivity to the 'temporal expressions in the Gospel' recognizing that 'Matthew has 'historicized' the evangelical tradition to a greater extent than Mark' (1975:27). Kingsbury acknowledges that 'Matthew often uses temporal phrases simply to designate some point in time that otherwise remains indistinct.'¹⁷ But he asserts that 'Matthew operates with temporal terms also on a second level, investing them with eschatological significance in the strictest sense' (:27-28). Thus Matthew uses phrase like ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κρίσεως (10:15), τέλος (10:22), τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος (28:20), the first and last being terms unique to Matthew. Of particular significance in this regard is the phrase Ἐν δὲ ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις in Matthew 3:1. This phrase breaks what Kingsbury calls the 'double pattern' of circumstantial particle of time (2:1,13,19; 4:12) or use of the adverb τότε (2:16; 3:13; 4:1) which characterises the first main section of Matthew.¹⁸ Its sense in 3:1 is however not general (= at that time) but eschatological

¹⁶ Both Kingsbury (1975) and Bauer (1988) come to the discussion of salvation-history in Matthew from the perspective of a study of the structure of Matthew's gospel. This study of structure is 'not an end in itself' as 'the reader wants to know what implications the study of structure holds for better understanding the content of a document' (Bauer 1988:142). Thus both Kingsbury and Bauer are ultimately interested in the theological implications of the structure, in particular the implications for Christology and Salvation-history.

¹⁷ See e.g. the phrases 'at that time' (Matthew 11:25, 12:1, 14:1), 'at that hour' (Matthew 8:13, 10:19, 18:1, 26:55), 'from that hour' (Matthew 9:22, 15:28, 17:18) etc. cf Kingsbury (1975:27 notes 104-108).

¹⁸ As noted in our discussion of Structure Kingsbury following Krentz (1964) views Matthew 1:1-4:16 as the first main section of the gospel with 1:1 as a superscription to this section and 4:17 and 16:21 forming the superscriptions to the other two in a tripartite structure.

(:28-31) and is in keeping with Matthew's understanding 'of John the Baptist as the eschatological Elijah who is himself privileged by God to inaugurate the last times' (:30). Thus the person and work of John are assimilated to the person and work of Jesus. This period of the 'last times' 'begins with the appearance of John and of Jesus and leads up to the end of present history' (:31).

Kingsbury's investigation of the temporal expressions in Matthew leads him to the 'inescapable conclusion' 'that Matthew does not divide this history into three epochs but two'. Furthermore, in the light of Matthew's 'theological affinity for the categories of 'prophecy and fulfilment', Kingsbury states that 'these two terms aptly characterise Matthew's view of the history of salvation. There is the 'time of Israel (OT),' which is preparatory to and prophetic of the coming of the Messiah. And there is the 'time of Jesus' (Messiah), in which the time of Israel finds its fulfilment and which, from the vantage point of Matthew's day, extends from the beginning of the ministry of John and of Jesus (past) through post Easter times (present) to the coming consummation of the age (future)' (1975:31). This schema however raises the question of how one is to view the time between the birth of Jesus and the beginning of John's ministry which, as we noted above, is fundamentally eschatological in tone? Kingsbury's answer is to point to the *inclusio* formed by Matthew 1:23 and Matthew 28:20. These show 'that what is constitutive of the time of Jesus is his abiding presence in the world as the earthly and then the exalted One, for it is in his person that God dwells with his people'. Since 1:23 has to do with the birth of Jesus, Matthew can be said to conceive the 'time of Jesus' as extending from the birth of Jesus to his parousia. As far as the significance of the phrase 'Εν δὲ ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις in 3:1 is concerned, this can be taken to depict that in the ministry of John, the 'time of Jesus' 'bursts into public.' As far as the way in which Matthew integrates his own age, the so-called time of the church, into his concept of the history of salvation, Kingsbury maintains that 'the alleged time of the church is to be construed as of the nature of a subcategory of the time of Jesus; it is to be subsumed under the 'last days' inaugurated by John and Jesus'.¹⁹

¹⁹ Kingsbury argues this point on the basis that 'Matthew unlike Luke brings no narrative of the ascension....Neither does Matthew, as does Luke, develop an expansive theology of the Holy Spirit. The reason for this is that, in Matthew's view, the earthly Jesus who lived in the company of his disciples, continues to reside in and preside over the church and the world as the exalted One (13:37-38, 18:20, 28:18-20). Hence we see that the subsumption of the church under the time of Jesus in the theology of Matthew is ultimately christologically motivated.' Thus for Kingsbury the key to Matthew's salvation-history is not ecclesiological but

Although the abovementioned scholars differ in their detailed analyses of and conclusions about Matthew's salvation-historical scheme, they do seem to have in common that they use the concept of salvation-history (albeit allegedly *Matthew's* salvation history) as a 'schematic understanding' or 'overarching category' ie a 'technique of composition which creates arches going beyond the immediate context to hold together the whole gospel' (Theissen 1983:197 note 4, 211-12, cf Howell, 1990:57). By this process, so the claim goes, Matthew would have used his conception of the history of salvation, of God's dealings with Israel, Jesus and the Church, as a unitary frame, a hermeneutical key, for modifying his sources and building them together into a coherent whole and in this way provided a method by which his community can understand the times and respond appropriately to the challenges which they faced.

3. The Methodological Issue: Salvation-History as Ideological Framework

From our above discussion we can see that there are two key methodological components to salvation-historical studies of Matthew. The first is the application of redaction criticism as the method by which the interpreter attempts to deduce Matthew's salvation-historical conception. The second is the understanding of salvation-history as a conceptual unitary frame which is external to the text,²⁰ but can be deduced through the study of the text. We will look at each of these in turn.

3.1. Narrative Rhetoric vs Redaction Criticism

First, concerning the redaction critical methods of the scholars surveyed above, **David Howell** (1990) joins his voice to the *literary critical choir* who bewail the apparent '....disregard for the narrative integrity of the Gospel stories' (1990:21) by scholars working from within a historical-critical framework. Although he is willing to concede that redaction criticism is a

christological. See Kingsbury (1975:32-37).

²⁰ It is this perception of salvation-history as *external framework* which causes scholars like Kingsbury to discuss salvation-history within the broader context of a discussion about the structure of Matthew's Gospel. See e.g. Kingsbury (1975:1-39), especially the introductory statement: '....there have been only a handful of commentators who have attempted to ascertain the nature or purpose of Matthew's Gospel from *its structure or scheme of salvation history* [italics mine]' (1975:1). In this statement 'structure' and 'scheme of salvation-history' seem almost synonymous. See further Bauer (1988:45-55).

‘movement toward the reintegration of the narrative’, Howell (1990:21) bemoans the fact that ‘even it is still concerned with the separation of tradition from redaction. The redaction critic is interested in the theology expressed in the finished Gospel, but it is assumed that this can best be found in the *editorial activity of the evangelist..*’ (italics mine). ‘The effect of focussing on the pre-literary parts of the Gospel narrative’ he continues, ‘has been to dissolve the sense of a narrative whole’ (1990:22). The basic problem Howell suggests is that the traditional historical critical paradigm has ‘not always appreciated the Gospels as texts with their own integrity’ to be read as a ‘homogeneous whole’. This is because the starting point for exegesis has reputedly been ‘something external to the text’ - in the case of redaction criticism the ‘hypothetical ‘text’ within the extant document’ - rather than the ‘text as it has come down to us’ (1990:23). It is important to note that Howell is in fact fairly measured in his comments regarding both the value of historical and theological questions and the limitations and constraints under which narrative critical and reader response theories operate.²¹ In his own words (1990:29), ‘the issue is therefore not whether the biblical critic must choose between historical criticism or a literary interpretation of the Gospel narrative, but how the methods peculiar to each perspective may contribute to a fuller understanding of Matthew’s Gospel’. Despite this fact however, he still maintains that ‘because the structured form we encounter in the Gospels is that of narrative...a literary approach which is sensitive to the way narrative functions appears to be essential in Gospel interpretation’ ie narrative criticism is to be preferred to redaction criticism. And, says Howell (1990:31), ‘given the uncertainties surrounding competing source hypotheses in gospel studies today, a literary approach which operates on the basis of the wholeness or integrity of the narrative may prove more fruitful for delineating the shape of Matthean theology than methods which seek to isolate Matthean redaction’.

That there are difficulties with some of the conclusions reached on *redaction-critical* grounds by proponents of a salvation-history approach to Matthew can be illustrated by looking more closely

²¹ See the full discussion in Howell (1990:19-53). Howell is careful to argue for a inclusive rather than exclusive approach to Biblical studies Thus he maintains that ‘the movement to a literary paradigm in Gospel studies should not...be construed as invalidating or illegitimizing historical and theological questions which may be asked of the narrative’ (1990:27) and affirms the importance of author, original reader and theological intention, of text as window as well as text as mirror to use the familiar analogy (cf Howell 1990:44-47).

at Kingsbury's handling of the phrase 'εν δὲ ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις in Matthew 3:1.²² As we noted earlier, this phrase, according to Kingsbury (1975:28-31) has a particular and exclusively eschatological significance in Matthew. Its prominence in 3:1 as disruptive of Matthew's usual pattern for beginning *pericope* in the early part of the gospel (see above) taken together with its claimed exclusive eschatological significance in Matthew 24 (the only other place the phrase occurs in Matthew) is then used by a quite extraordinary feat of exegetical ingenuity, to argue that the eschatological age in fact begins (in public that is) with the appearance of John the Baptist and continues until the parousia of Jesus the Son of Man. Leaving aside the obvious objection that such an insistence places an unacceptable semantic limitation upon the phrase, we may note in the first place that Kingsbury could in fact have argued his point thus far without his references to Mark as Matthew's source - indeed his argument is not dependent upon it. *Thus far therefore, redaction criticism is not the issue.* When however it comes to the establishment of the thesis by 'two additional points', Kingsbury (1975:30) *does* employ redaction-critical methods. First he claims that Matthew is indebted to Mark for the phrase 'εν δὲ ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις. In Mark 1:9 the phrase is used 'to call attention to the beginning of the ministry of Jesus. Matthew, by contrast, guided by his understanding of John the Baptist as the eschatological Elijah who is himself privileged by God to inaugurate the last times (*cf* 3:2; 11:13-14; 17:10-13), has 'relocated' this phrase forward to underline just this truth.' Second, attempting to deal with the objection that the phrase in Matthew 3:1 could just as well be given a non-eschatological interpretation, Kingsbury points out that in his use of Mark 8:1ff where Mark uses the phrase in a 'conventional historical sense' (=at that time), Matthew deliberately avoids the phrase in order to preserve its exclusive eschatological import.

Can such an argument be sustained? In my opinion the answer is No ! In his earlier argument for the structural unity of Matthew 1:1-4:16 Kingsbury points out that 'Ch 3 is closely related to chs 1-2, and a structural sign of this, which is virtually ignored by all commentators, is the particle δε (now, then) *which serves to link ch 3 with the preceding* [italics mine]' (1975:13). And yet it

²² I have chosen Kingsbury because in his study of temporal expressions in Matthew's gospel, he comes closest to the 'narrative temporal ordering' approach that Howell employs. Surprisingly enough, despite Howell's objection to the emphasis on the redactional activity of the evangelist, his criticism of Kingsbury's views regarding Matthew 3:1 though accurate, are really quite bland. According to Howell (1990:87) Kingsbury fails to pay attention 'to the way information is temporally and sequentially communicated in the gospel.'

is surely this very fact which Kingsbury himself is ignoring when he interprets *ἐν δὲ ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις* as eschatological because of its connection with Matthew 24. Surely it would be more consistent to interpret this phrase in connection with its immediate narrative temporal context as ‘in those days = at that time’? Kingsbury admits that Mark uses the phrase in both the conventional historical and eschatological sense? Why then should Mark 1:9 be eschatological for everything in the context argues for a conventional historical sense (quite apart from story time)? Mark’s *Καὶ ἐγένετο* (1:9 *cf* 1:4) serves to link the appearance of Jesus closely to that of the fore-runner John, so that the reader may identify Jesus as the ‘more powerful one who comes after’ John (*Ἐρχεται ὁ ἰσχυρότερός μου ὀπίσω μου*). The eschatological import of this material, if present at all, is based on the allusion to Elijah in the description of John’s dress in 1:6 (*cf* 2 Kings 1:8) and the use Malachi 3:1 (*cf* Malachi 4:5) not on the phrase *ἐν δὲ ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις*. But if Mark 1:9 is ‘historical’ and not eschatological, then its use by Matthew in 3:1 proves exactly the opposite point to that asserted by Kingsbury. It seems more likely that Kingsbury has brought his eschatological understanding of John the Baptist to Matthew 3:1 rather than derived it *from* the verse itself, and that therefore it is not the method of redaction criticism *per se* but the application of the method which is at fault in this case.

A similar argument could be put forward with regard to Matthew’s addition of the ‘chronological formula *apo...tote*’ at ‘characteristic points in his Gospel’. This says Strecker (1983:71) is ‘not meant to express a development in the life of Jesus, but nevertheless emphasises a temporal, linear movement’ ie part of a ‘historicizing tendency’ which serves to distinguish the ‘time of Jesus’ from the ‘time of the church’. But is there any necessary link between this conclusion and the redaction critical method? I would suggest not. For the phrase is treated as redactional by *inter alia* Kingsbury (1975) and Luz (1989), the former in connection with the structure of Matthew’s gospel and his consequent Christology, the latter to disagree with Kingsbury’s conclusions about Matthew’s structure and to argue that Matthew 4:12-17 forms a literary unit which functions in correspondence to the Markan summary in Mark 1:14-15, but which identifies Matthew 14:13-16 as the ‘decisive presupposition for the Jesus proclamation which begins in vs 17’ (Luz 1989:192). This presupposition points to a ‘second level to that which the sending of Jesus has started in the history of salvation: the way of salvation to the Gentiles...Under the future perspective of salvation which is to come to the Gentiles and precisely in agreement with God’s

plan, Jesus in v 17 begins his proclamation to Israel. ‘No historicizing here - indeed quite the opposite. Thus conclusions about Matthew’s historicizing tendency are not the product of a redaction critical analysis of the text, but rather something which has been brought to the text and which has its origins elsewhere, in all likelihood in the debate about *historical* and *kerygmatic* theology which was part of the milieu during which Strecker wrote.’²³

But what of Howell’s attempt ‘with the help of selected aspects of narrative criticism and a type of reader response theory to describe the narrative rhetoric of Matthew in order to understand better the inclusive nature of the narrative’ (1990:17)? Does this fare any better than the redaction critical methods employed by the proponents of salvation-history? Howell’s answer to this question is as confident ‘yes!’ This, he claims, is because ‘the adequacy of the traditional historical critical paradigm is limited in providing an overall perspective for reading the gospels, because it overlooks the ways in which the narrative can involve readers....’ (1990:24, *cf* Lategan 1985:92), whereas the ‘new breed of literary critical scholars’, among whom he includes himself, give special attention ‘not only to the way a narratives component parts interrelate as part of the narrative, but also to its effects upon the reader and the way it achieves its effects’(1990:25). To this confident claim we can respond as follows:

First, we note that according to Howell (1990:26) such literary critical scholars ‘consider the primary reference in the text or story to be the narrative world of the Gospel rather than some historical event or theological idea which lies beyond the text’ - a narrative world which remains essentially a creation of the author of the gospel and thus different from the real world no matter what the author’s historical intentions might be. This is taken to be a plus for the method. Howell is, as we noted above, fairly careful to point out that ‘the movement to a literary paradigm in Gospel studies should not be construed as invalidating or illegitimizing historical and theological questions which may be asked of the narrative’ pointing out that ‘a responsible biblical literary criticism cannot be ahistorical’(1990:27-28). But in practice, it is precisely at this point that Howell potentially falls prey to an inconsistency which, in my opinion, is so common among narrative critics that one could be forgiven for thinking that it was inherent to the method itself.

²³ Frankemölle (1974) *contra* Strecker (1971); Walker (1967). See also Kingsbury’s criticism of Frankemölle (Kingsbury 1975:37-39). Likewise the categorisations of salvation-history by Meier (1979) and Senior (1996:38-40) seem to reflect the renewed interest in the question of the Matthean community.

Thus, in his rejection of salvation-history as ‘a heuristic concept to express the ideological point of view of the Gospel’ (see below), Howell traces the tendency to do so to ‘a misunderstanding, or at the very least an uncritical use’ of the connection between ‘narrative and history’ (1990:72). He quotes Vorster (1983:92) that it is mistaken ‘to interpret a narrative in direct relation to the real world, for real world and narrated world *need* not be one and the same [italics mine]’. But he then goes on to speak in terms that lead one to conclude that narrated world and real world *cannot* be one and the same. Thus he maintains that ‘the so-called ‘historicizing’ tendency of the gospel tradition...figuring prominently in tripartite schemes of salvation history, can be seen as part of the narrative world created by the evangelist. The different chronological periods which are differentiated in tripartite concepts of salvation history may evince *nothing more* than the double temporal perspective characteristic of narratives with an overt intrusive narrator [italics mine]’ (1990:73). Likewise ‘any temporal distancing of the events of Jesus’ life in Matthew is a result of the double temporal perspective in the Gospel, whose narrator tells the story retrospectively. In other words’ the so-called ‘historicization’ of the gospel tradition ascribed to Matthew in tripartite schemes of salvation history is simply a ‘literaturization’ which arises from the manner the evangelist chose to tell his story’ (1990:74). As a criticism of salvation-history as a ‘heuristic concept’ such comments may be legitimate (see below). But the danger is that they may be taken to imply that the temporal expressions within the Gospel are purely a literary device with no possible connection historical reality within say the life of Jesus, a view which seems to me to be illegitimate and inconsistent with earlier claims. Indeed it runs the risk of failing to take seriously that behind the narrative form of the Gospel of Matthew lies the reality of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. To miss this point is rather to miss the wood for the trees for it is the story of Jesus the Christ, the Son of Abraham, the son of David which gives significance to *Matthew’s* story of Jesus and not the other way around.²⁴

Second, we note that helpful though the actual application of Howell’s ‘selected of narrative

²⁴ A similar point can be made with reference to the tendency within Narrative criticism to talk about Jesus words as if they are in effect nothing more than the words of Matthew the implied author and a vehicle for the expression of his point of view. In that Jesus stands as a character - indeed *the* character - within the narrative, his words do serve to reinforce the point of view which the implied author seeks to commend to the reader. But they should surely not be limited to this as if the whole of gospel interpretation can be undertaken on a purely literary basis without due consideration for history. The words are only of significance because they are the words of Jesus who came not only to teach, but to save his people from their sins.

criticism and a type of reader response criticism' is for the interpretation of Matthew's gospel, it is not without its own problems. Howell bases much of his work on Gerard Genette's study of time relations in narrative,²⁵ and in particular the concepts of *analepsis* and *prolepsis*. According to Genette, analepsis is 'any evocation after the fact of an event that took place earlier than the point where we are at any given moment' and prolepsis is 'any narrative manoeuvre that consists of narrating or evoking in advance an event that will take place later' (1980:40). This classification can then be further refined to include 'mixed analepses' comprising 'events that begin prior to the narrative but which continue into the plotted time of the story' (Howell 1990:99) and 'mixed prolepses' which 'serve a linking function, anticipating events that begin in the narrative and continue beyond its end' (Howell 1990:102). Thus, whereas mixed analepses 'link the story of Jesus to the prior history of Israel', mixed prolepses 'link Matthew's story with events subsequent to Jesus death and resurrection'. These 'mixed prolepses' are thus of special interest to Howell because they indicate how later readers are included in the Gospel, the very question which as we noted above, salvation-historical approaches sought to answer.

According to Howell one illustration of such 'mixed prolepses' is Matthew 1:21. 'The conditions necessary for Jesus to save the people from their sin (1:21) are fulfilled by the end of the narrative with Jesus' death and resurrection, but the offer of salvation continues in the life and mission of the church' (1990:102). That the programmatic statement in Matthew 1:21 is proleptically linked to Jesus' death in particular will be demonstrated in greater detail in our discussion of the plot of Matthew's gospel. What must be queried at this stage is whether the statement (1) should not rather be taken as 'internal prolepsis' and (2) whether it does not also have a significant analeptic component to it.

(1) Considering the first point, one must say that although the offer of 'salvation from sin' is part of the orthodox and evangelical understanding of the Christian Gospel, it is difficult to see how Matthew 1:21 functions as 'mixed prolepsis' to establish this point. Who exactly are the people (τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ) whom Jesus will save from their sins? Despite Matthew's more general

²⁵ Genette, G. 1980. *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*. Oxford: Blackwell.

usage of both the terms ‘sinners’²⁶ and ‘people’,²⁷ there is no *necessary* reason to connect the ‘he will save his people from their sins’ with ‘the offer of salvation in the life and mission of the church.’ Has this latter idea not in fact been supplied by Howell’s own theological framework (*viz* his pre-understanding that the church’s mission actually involved the proclamation of salvation from sin) rather than by the narrative text itself? Thus Howell may well be guilty of the very thing that he sees as the Achilles’ heel of redaction criticism. In fact it seems preferable in the context to interpret the phrase τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ as a reference to Israel. The reference to the sins of ‘his people’ has no prior explication in the narrative, except possibly with reference to Israel’s exile in Matthew 1:11,12 and 17. But the expository nature of the genealogy, the link between the genealogy and 1:18-24 and the explicit reference to the prophet Isaiah whose prophecy was so closely associated with salvation from exile, precisely on the basis of the forgiveness of sins surely establish that no such explication is needed.²⁸ The sins from which ‘his people’ need saving are the sins which took Israel into exile during the course of their history, and which need to be dealt with if that exile is to be brought to an end.²⁹ And it is precisely that end of the exile which Matthew envisages to be occurring in and through Jesus the Christ (cf 1:16,17,21). Thus the statement ‘he will save his people from their sins’ also serves to link the life of Jesus and in particular the death of Jesus with the prior history of Israel as set out in the genealogy. We thus conclude secondly (2) that the statement has an analeptic function

²⁶ Matthew uses the verbal form ‘to sin’ and its cognates only twice in his gospel, both in chapter 18 with reference to ‘a brother who sins against you.’ The word which the NIV translates as sin in 18:7 is literally ‘a stumbling block’ (σκανδάλον). In this context it appears to be a reference to apostasy rather than ‘sin’ in general terms (cf 8:8-9). A survey of Matthew’s use of the nominal ἁμαρτία and its cognates shows a variety of references associated with the term. In Matthew 9: 10-13 the term refers to those who are the opposite of the ‘righteous’ (identified here with the Pharisees who see no need of forgiveness, thus by implication the *self-righteous*) and who are synonymous, at least in the perception of the ‘righteous’ with the tax-collectors. In 11:19, the sinners are those like the tax-collectors whom Jesus befriends (a synonym for calls and forgives cf 9:1-13) in contrast to the ‘this generation’ who refuse to repent.

²⁷ Similarly Matthew’s use of the term λαός is varied. In 2:4-6 it has clear reference to God’s people Israel who require shepherding. In 15:8 and 27:45 (perhaps 2:4?), the ‘people’ are Israel who honour God in lip but not life and who condemn Jesus to death. In 4:16 the term refers to those in darkness, with strong but not exclusive Gentile connotations to the term.

²⁸ See Chapter 2- Genealogy. Matthew’s phrase ἀπὸ τῆς μετοικεσίας Βαβυλῶνος ἕως τοῦ Χριστοῦ (1:17) anticipates the theme of ‘fulfilment’ which is so characteristic of his handling of the relationship of Jesus to the Old Testament history and tradition. His description of Jesus as the one who will save his people from their sins in 1:21, clarifies how Jesus is able to fulfil the promise that Israel’s exile, still continuing despite the return under Zerubbabel, is finally brought to an end.

²⁹ See Wright (1992:384-85). See also our discussion of the plot of Matthew’s gospel.

as well as a proleptic one. Indeed recognizing this enables us to discern that given the proleptic connection between Matthew 1:21 and the death of Jesus and the analeptic link between Matthew 1:21 and the story of Israel, there is an important analeptic dimension to the death of Jesus as well. This in turn will act as a safeguard against the tendency to exclude Israel from Jesus' saving work and consequently to postulate a replacement theology in which the church replaces Israel, a concept which in my opinion is quite foreign to Matthew.³⁰

With regard to method we must conclude then that *both* redaction criticism *and* narrative criticism have their strengths and weaknesses when it comes to assessing the way in which the significance of Matthew's gospel is to be understood. Although each method has some inherent disadvantages e.g. the uncertainty about redaction and tradition at various points of the gospel or the tendency to draw too clear a line between story and history, the value of each method at any point is by and large dependent upon the care that the interpreter takes over its application and the conclusions that are drawn as a result. Neither method should in my opinion be set over and against the other. Each should be employed carefully and where appropriate. In this way in my opinion we can pursue as comprehensive an interpretation of Matthew and its significance as possible for all its readers, both past and present (*cf* Stanton 1992a:23-84).

3.2. *Ideological Framework vs Narrative Entanglement*

The above discussion brings us to a second major criticism of salvation-history as the method for determining inclusiveness in Matthew. The essence of the objection can be seen in the words of Howell (1990:58): 'The question must be raised, however, whether the category of salvation- history does justice to the inclusive nature of the gospel. As a final interpretive synthesis of the thematic message in Matthew, does the use of this theological concept neglect or ignore part of the evangelist's rhetoric of entanglement which includes or involves a reader in the story?' Here then is the rub: Can salvation-history which by definition is something *external to the text* provide an adequate means of inclusion for readers *of the text* ? Howell

³⁰ It is frequently overlooked in such static conceptions of replacement theology that the early disciples were in fact Jews. Thus although Matthew does tell a story which involves the rejection of Jesus by the 'officialdom of Israel' as national representatives, it also tells of the commissioning of these Jewish believers to fulfil the mission given to Israel at Sinai to be a light to the nations. Thus the early disciples as much as Jesus himself occupy the role of a remnant upon which a church consisting of both Jew and Gentile will be built.

acknowledges that the theological concept of salvation-history 'is closely tied to the narrative form of Matthew' because of its links to the 'chronological and configurational dimensions of the narrative which are constitutive of its plot' (1990:52). But his answer to the question of inclusion is negative: 'Notwithstanding this close connection between the narrative form of the Gospel and the concept of salvation history, salvation history seems inadequate as a heuristic paradigm for interpreting the inclusive nature of Matthew because it paradoxically neglects the narrative character of the Gospel genre' (1990:90). His own proposal for a more appropriate manner of inclusion is via the concept of the 'implied reader' whose ideal reading is formulated by a number of literary devices over a text-controlled sequential encounter which is however not 'unidirectional' nor exclusive of post reading synthesis, but which nevertheless takes account of both 'an author's rhetorical and communicative techniques and of a reader's appropriation of the narrative' (1990:43-44).

But one might well ask whether behind Howell's approach there are not in fact certain salvation-historical assumptions which are merely unacknowledged. Granted that 'authorial intentions and communicative conventions should therefore combine with the temporal reading process to constrain a reader's actualization and interpretation of Biblical narratives' (1990:49) and granted that in reality because of the different contexts of reading communities, there will be a 'plurality of interpretation' (within acceptable text determined critical limits) (1990:49), what criterion is there within the reader-response model to determine whether or not a particular aspect of Jesus' instruction remains valid and ought to be appropriated by the reader? Is it adequate merely to speak of a reader being guided by the narrative to 'accept' rather than 'reject' Jesus? And do the majority of the examples of so-called 'mixed prolepses' and 'external prolepses' which 'link the intended reader's experiences with Matthew's story of Jesus' (1990:103ff) not merely assume certain salvation-historical perceptions regarding what is relevant to the story time of Jesus (the story NOW) and what is applicable to the time of the readers (Narrative NOW)? In my opinion they do, a fact tacitly acknowledged in Howell's regular use of conclusions actually arising from the redaction critical work of Luz, Held etc but claimed to be the result of a study of narrative temporal ordering. Furthermore, is it not true to say that despite all the practical help that

Howell's narrative criticism and type of reader response theory³¹ actually does provide in shaping an appropriate response (and it provides much), it fails to deal with what are perhaps *the* fundamental questions, viz *Response to what?* and *Why bother at all?* These are questions which salvation-history in fact helps us to answer because it locates the story of Jesus precisely where it belongs and that is within the context of the greater story of God's activity to actually save through Jesus all who will come to him (cf Matthew 11:28).

Howell recognises that 'although literary categories have not been used by biblical critics working within the traditional historical critical paradigm, many have treated the theological concept of salvation-history as the ideological point of view³² of Matthew in their interpretation of the Gospel' (1990:57). And he concedes that salvation-history is, like point of view, closely related to the 'chronological and configurational dimensions of the narrative' noted above - the *what* and the *how* of the story. Nor is he willing to follow the 'tendency in literary criticism, perhaps under the influence of New Criticism with its neglect of the author, to limit discussion about point of view to the narrative voice in the story' (1990:37).³³ Would this not then suggest that rather than deny the validity of salvation-history as a valuable aspect of gospel interpretation, he would do better to recognize that the real problem is that the particular categories of salvation-history that have been proposed have not in fact adequately reflected those which are inherent within the text itself and which can legitimately be deduced from the text. For example, Howell is thus quite correct when he points out that phrases like 'time of Israel', 'time of Jesus' and 'time of the Church' do not actually reflect Matthew's own salvation-history categories (see below), but rather those of the scholars concerned and the debates about *kerygmatic* and *historical* theology, the *development of doctrine* and the *relationship between the Testaments* in which they were

³¹ Howell employs a form of reader response theory which is *neither* arbitrary, *nor* isolationist. Reading must be shaped by the text and take cognisance of both the history of interpretation of the text and its contemporary reception. And, even in the case of the latter, the reader applies critical faculty and recognizes the value of a post-reading synthesis as well as the act of reading. See Howell (1990:38-42).

³² Howell (1990:57) drawing on the work of Uspensky (1973) and Lanser (1981). By ideological point of view is meant that *evaluative* perspective by means of which Matthew selects and shapes both the *content* and *form* of his narrative.

³³ This is because 'the judgement of the author is always present in a narrative text' for 'it is ultimately the author who decides what sort of 'persona' and evaluative perspective will be utilized in telling the story.' Howell (1990:37) cf Booth (1983:20). By 'author' here Howell is referring to the real author, the evangelist and not merely to the implied author.

engaged. And it is quite true that one of the results of such pre-determined salvation-history categories (whether bi- or tripartite) was that the boundaries of Matthew's own salvation-history scheme such as it is were almost totally ignored.³⁴ But the abuse of the concept does not mean that the concept is without value for understanding the temporal-theological aspects of Matthew's ideological point of view. What is needed then is not the jettisoning of the concept of salvation-history *per se* as a result of a false dichotomy between *story* and *history* or as a reaction against salvation-history schemes which have been imposed upon Matthew's gospel. What is needed alongside of an integrated method for reading Matthew's story appropriately, is a salvation-history which is in itself appropriate precisely because it arises out of Matthew's gospel rather than being imposed upon it. And it is to a preliminary formulation of such a salvation-history, albeit in broad terms, that we now turn our attention.

4. Salvation-History in the Gospel of Matthew

By the phrase salvation-history in Matthew, I mean then what I referred to above as the *temporal-theological* aspects of Matthew's ideological point of view ie Matthew's evaluative presentation of God's saving work in and through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. How the life, death and resurrection of Jesus inter-relate and achieve God's saving work will be discussed in our examination of the *Plot of Matthew's Gospel*. That they form the focus of God's saving work is surely clear from the fact that whatever Matthew has to say about the past or the future, the primary focus of his gospel is the 'story of Jesus' not only in narrative form but also as a historical reality. That having been said, it is clear even from the most superficial reading of the Gospel that Matthew was concerned to present his story of Jesus not merely in its own terms, but also in its relationship to what has gone before, primarily but not exclusively the story of Israel (cf Matthew 1:1-17), and in its relationship to what must follow ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ

³⁴ Thus, for example, it is quite extraordinary that none of the scholars concerned, though describing a 'time of Israel' (Strecker 1971, 1983; Kingsbury 1975) or *Abraham & Vorgeschichte des Messias* (Walker 1967) took any notice at all of Matthew's characteristic ἀπὸ... ἕως even when discussing the genealogy or the significance of John the Baptist. The result of this was that whereas the issue of continuity and discontinuity between the so-called 'time of Jesus' and the 'time of the Church' were discussed at length in terms of *historicization* and *transparency*, the question of continuity and discontinuity between *Jesus and Israel* was resolved uniformly in terms of *discontinuity* and *replacement theology* in which, to use Trilling's title (1964), the Church replaces the Jews as *Das Wahre Israel*. Thus the rejection of Jesus by the Jews is made to dominate over the fact of Jesus as fulfilment of the promises made to the Jew's, not least the promise of their salvation from exile through the forgiveness of their sins.

αἰῶνος (Matthew 28:20).

Described like this it becomes clear that there is far more to Matthew's salvation-history than a mere static conception of 'periodization' such as 'time of Israel', 'time of Jesus' or 'time of the Church' or for that matter a description of temporal ordering within Matthew's narrative. Other factors such as the meaning of fulfilment and the use of the Old Testament in Matthew as well as the much debated matter of Matthew's Christology and the related question of the titles which Matthew ascribes to Jesus within the narrative come into play. Some of these will be dealt with in greater detail in the ensuing chapters, but it is not possible to deal with them all within the scope of our project. For present purposes I have chosen to focus on what one might call Matthew's own unique 'periodization' within his narrative of Jesus the saviour, a periodization which can be identified by a selective study of Matthew's temporal use of the terms ἀπὸ...ἕως and, in particular, a combination of the two.

4.1. *From Abraham to David to the Exile to the Christ (Matthew 1:17).*

The first, and as we have seen in our discussion of Matthew's genealogy, the most significant of the temporal-theological or salvation-historical indicators in Matthew's gospel is the three-fold formula in Matthew 1:17. Since we have already discussed this in some detail, our discussion at this point will simply be by way of summary and further clarification.

The formula is, as we have seen, centred around four key loci viz Ἀβραάμ, Δαυὶδ, τῆς μετοικεσίας Βαβυλῶνος and τοῦ Χριστοῦ. The third of these as an event rather than a personal reference is, as Wright (1992:385) puts it, 'unexpected'. And yet it is as we noted earlier and, as we will aim to demonstrate throughout the thesis, the fulcrum around which much of Matthew's thinking about Jesus turns. The four periods which are designated by Matthew's preferred phrase ἀπὸ...ἕως viz from Abram to David to the exile to the Christ, fall well within the temporal boundaries of Matthew's narrative world. These temporal boundaries range from *creation* (Matthew 25:34, cf 13:35; 19:4; 24:21) until *consummation* (Matthew 28:20, cf 24:44; 25:31) (cf Kingsbury

1988:41).³⁵ Neither of these temporal extremities of Matthew's narrative world are purely incidental to his story of Jesus. Certainly the time of the consummation is a key component not only in setting the temporal bounds of the disciples' world-wide mission and of Jesus' presence, but also for the ultimate vindication of Jesus as 'The Lord' (Matthew 22:44). Similarly, the time of creation or the beginning (ἀπ' ἀρχῆς) as Matthew sometimes refers to it, is not merely the time at which the ideal pattern for the kingdom is displayed (19:4), but is also the time from which the gift of the kingdom is purposed (25:34). And each of these poles - *creation* and *consummation* - have connections with the first and last of the loci in Matthew 1:17. For the call of Abram in Genesis 12:1-3 is set against the backdrop of Genesis 1-11 and in particular the loss of the kingdom ideal in the terrible exchange of *blessing* for *curse* and the consequent loss of that *rest in the presence of God* which was God's creation purpose for humanity (Genesis 2:1-4, cf Genesis 4:13-14). And there is little doubt given the aforementioned 'international flavour' which Matthew consistently ascribes to Abram, that it is precisely with this hope of 'blessing for the nations' in mind that Matthew ends his gospel in the way that he does. But this blessing is of course not independent of God's presence. Thus we find that Matthew ends (28:20) not only with the prospect of the inclusion of the nations, but with the promise of the ongoing presence of the one who while both son of Abram and son of David (1:1), is uniquely God with us (cf 1:23).

Given this broad sweep of Matthew's concern, how are we to understand the clear emphasis on Abram, David, exile, Christ, a period which, in terms of Matthew 1:17 at least, does seem to be particularly focussed on 'the time of Israel'? The answer is surely found in recognizing that both Abram the man and his descendants, Isaac, Jacob and 'Judah and his brothers' are the mediators within the unfolding of salvation-history of God's creation purposes. And what was true for Israel, Abraham's descendants as a nation, becomes in the period of David's reign particularly focussed in David and his son (cf 2 Samuel 7 and the comments in the preceding chapter on genealogy). But this mediation of *blessing for the nations* was placed under threat by the fact of the exile. Just as humankind had been excluded from the garden of God's presence so Israel were

³⁵ Howell (1990:97) states that 'the easiest way to determine the temporal boundaries of Matthew's narrative world is to look at the earliest and the latest events referred to in the Gospel'. But the difference between story time and discourse time also warn us that the earliest event may not be the event mentioned first. Thus although the 'time of Abram' is the first mentioned in the narrative, there are as we have seen references to creation within the narrative. This thus raises the question about the significance of Abram and the temporal periods set out in Matthew 1:17 and underlines their importance for understanding Matthew's story of Jesus.

removed from the land. Israel, like Cain have become restless wanderers on the earth. Thus it is on reflection not unexpected that Matthew should mention the exile - indeed, given his point of view, it would have been unexpected had he not. Nor is it a surprise that during the course of the narrative we should find Jesus who has been introduced from the outset as son of Abraham and son of David, claiming both a unique filial relationship with God the Father (11:27) and the sole right and ability to restore 'rest' (11:28) to *all* who come to him. The precursor to this is Matthew's summary statement that what was promised to Abraham, centred on David, and lost in the exile is ultimately realised through Jesus the Messiah, the son of Abraham, the son of David.

4.2. *From the days of John the Baptist until now.... (Matthew 11:1-18).*

The offer of spiritual rest that Jesus holds out to all who will come to him (Matt 11:25-28) and which we noted briefly above, occurs in the midst of a narrative section (Matthew 11:1-12:50) in which Jesus confronts both misunderstanding and apathy with respect to his mission on the one hand (11:1-24) and open and even deadly hostility on the other (12:1-50). And the reason is not far to seek, for twice in this section Jesus characterises the 'generation' of his day not only as *cynical* (11:16-19), but as *wicked and adulterous* (12:39), designations which prepare the reader for what is to follow in the parable discourse in Matthew 13. Given such a setting, the prospects for the kingdom of heaven, which forms the heart of Jesus' preaching, seem to be very bleak indeed. Jesus' outburst of praise (11:25) and expectant invitation (11:28) therefore come as a great surprise. To what can they be ascribed? The answer comes in Matthew 11:25. Jesus knows that the success of his 'preaching and teaching' (11:1) lies ultimately within God's control. It is God who reveals and God who conceals (11:25-26). All that Jesus can do is to go on preaching and urging those who have ears to hear (11:15).

It is within this wider context of kingdom proclamation, misunderstanding and hostility and, in particular that of misunderstanding, that we encounter a second salvation-historical indicator *viz* that found in the notoriously difficult Matthew 11:11-15, particularly vss 12 and 13. As is to be

expected, the passage has been the subject of intense debate³⁶ in which a number of key questions have been raised. Amongst others, there is the question of the identity and intention of the βιασταὶ - are they *in malam partem* or *in bonam partem*? There is the question concerning the kingdom of heaven - in what way can it be said to be βιάζεται? There is the question of the temporal indicators ἀπὸ and ἕως - are they to be taken as inclusive or exclusive? Finally, of particular importance for our investigation, a question about ἄρτι - what salvation-historical significance does it have? In answer to these questions, we note the following:

First, despite John's own misunderstanding about Jesus' person and mission (vs 3), Jesus is careful to ascribe to John a position of major significance within salvation history. The one who has ears to hear (vs 15) and who can recognize wisdom when they see it (11:19b), is the one who is willing to accept that John the Baptist is indeed Ἡλίας ὁ μέλλων ἔρχεσθαι (vs 14),³⁷ 'the messenger' 'about whom it is written' (11:10). It is this fact of being the 'fore-runner' which constitutes John's own greatness.³⁸ Over the whole course of *salvation-history*, not human history in general, no *prior* figure is as significant as John. The use of the term ἐγγήγερται (11:11) suggests that Jesus has prophets in mind, not all individuals. John is then not just a prophet, but the greatest of the prophets, for he is *that prophet*, the Elijah like figure, who prepares the way and stands at the very brink of the new age of fulfilment.

Second, the fact that John is not only a prophet but the 'one written about' (11:10) and thus the *object* of the prophetic witness, means that he is *more than a prophet* (11:9) (*cf* Carson 1984:262). But does this mean that John himself is 'in the kingdom', in the sense of being part of or perhaps even the inaugurator of the new kingdom era which has dawned? Should the

³⁶ See the discussion and bibliographies in Davies & Allison (1991:233-302); Hagner (1993:302-11); Luz (2001:129-76). I am particularly indebted to Carson (1994:179-94). I would also like to acknowledge my colleague David Secombe for his comments and bibliographical notes in an as-yet unpublished article entitled *The Forceful who seize the Kingdom*. Of particular interest is his reference to Jacob who wrestled with God in pursuit of a blessing as the archetypal βιαστής *in bonam partem*.

³⁷ Although both Luke and Mark imply that John the Baptist is *Elijah*, only Matthew makes this identification explicit.

³⁸ Carson (1994:183) is thus quite correct when he observes that 'the first part of v 11 while declaring that John the Baptist is the greatest person who has ever lived (implicitly *up to that point*) is in the context of this chapter astonishingly christocentric.' John's greatness derives from his relationship with the even greater Jesus.

temporal phrase ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν ἡμερῶν Ἰωάννου τοῦ βαπτιστοῦ ἕως ἄρτι be interpreted in this way, implying a so-called *inclusive* rendering of ἕως in vs 12 and an *exclusive* one in vs 13? (Cf Davies & Allison 1991:257). The use of ἀπὸ in Matthew is usually initiatory and inclusive,³⁹ but we should bear in mind two things that Carson (1994:179-94) makes clear. First, although both Jesus and John proclaim the nearness of the kingdom (cf Matthew 3:2, 4:17), they do so in very different ‘redactional settings’. Carson rightly points out that ‘John the Baptist preaches the nearness of the kingdom in the context of being identified as the one who prepares the way for the Lord (3.3)By contrast Jesus preaches repentance and announces the nearness of the kingdom (4.17) in the context of being identified as the one who fulfills Isaiah 9 by the onset of his ministry in Galilee’(Carson 1994:184). Put in simple terms then, the difference between John and Jesus is precisely that of *prophecy* on the one hand and *fulfilment* on the other, a distinction of which John is well aware (cf 3:11-12). Second, ‘the expression "from the days of John the Baptist" simply means from the time of the activity of John the Baptist....It was during that time that Jesus was baptised and began his public ministry; the text says nothing about the Baptist’s participation in it, still less his inauguration of it’ (1994:187-88). The upshot of this is that the ‘time of the kingdom’, the ‘time of fulfilment’ as Matthew regularly depicts it, should be seen to begin not with John, but with Jesus.

Third, this means that ἕως Ἰωάννου in vs 13 is *inclusive*,⁴⁰ not in the sense of course that the words of John form part of the Scriptural witness, ie, the prophetic witness of the ‘Prophets and the Law’, but in the sense that John as one who ‘prepares the way’ (vs 10) has the same fundamental ministry as ‘all the prophets and the Law’ (vs 13), viz a ministry of preparation. To be sure, he has pride of place within that preparatory ministry, for it is in ‘the days of John’ that Jesus appears and the advance of the kingdom begins. But he belongs in ‘the time of preparation’

³⁹ A study of the temporal use of ἀπὸ within Matthew’s Gospel is instructive in this regard. Kingsbury (1975) has based his understanding of Matthew’s structure on the phrase Ἀπὸ τότε ἤρξατο particularly in 4:17 and 16:21. Although it is unlikely that these should be taken as formal structural markers for a 3-fold division of the Gospel, they are important temporal markers for the flow of the narrative. The sense of initiation that is found in these verses is based on the presence of ἤρξατο rather than ἀπὸ alone, but elsewhere in the Gospel ἀπὸ appears to be used in an inclusive and initiatory sense (cf 9:22; 13:35; 15:28; 23:39; 26:16; 26:64; 27:45).

⁴⁰ This seems also to be the case with ἕως in Matthew 28:20. Jesus’ presence does not cease with the end of the age, although one might well argue that the presence with a *missionary church* does since at the consummation of all things such missionary activity ceases.

rather than in the ‘the time of the kingdom’. This is surely clear in the light of the Matthew’s respective application of the words of Isaiah to John and Jesus in 3:1-4:17 which I take to be part of Matthew’s prologue, though with 4:17 providing a key pivotal point in the flow of the narrative rather than a rigid structural marker. As the ‘voice calling in the desert’, John, like the preacher in Isaiah 40, announces the coming of the kingdom of God and the imminent end of Israel’s exile (*cf* Isaiah 40:1- 11). Jesus by contrast, in keeping with the mission of the king promised in Isaiah 9:6-7, actually brings the light of salvation into the darkness of exile, ie, he actually brings the exile to an end. Here too Carson’s comments (1994:185) are worth noting, for he argues, in my opinion conclusively, that the μικρότερος ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ who are greater than John are the proclaimers of the kingdom ‘now here’ in the person and work of Jesus. If, as I surmise, the term ἄρτι in the phrase ἕως ἄρτι refers to the ‘time of Jesus’ rather than that of the evangelist (see below, *cf* Howell 1990:73), then Matthew has in view here the early disciples who, in Matthew 10:6, are to carry the news of the kingdom present in Jesus to the lost sheep of Israel (10:6). But of course as Matthew 10:18 hints and 28:19 commands explicitly, the mission to the ‘lost sheep of Israel’ is only the start. Thus there is a second sense in which the disciple-missionaries are greater than John for their mission is far wider in scope than his.

Fourth, we note that the identification of ὁ δὲ μικρότερος ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ with the missionaries of Matthew 10 serves to cast light on the possible interpretation of the exceedingly difficult ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν βιάζεται καὶ βιασταὶ ἄρπάζουσιν αὐτήν (11:12). From the beginning of Jesus’ ministry in the days of John the Baptist, through the mission to the ‘lost sheep’ and right up to the time within the narrative when Jesus speaks about John to the crowd, the ‘kingdom of heaven’ manifested in the words and works of Jesus and the words of his emissaries has gone forward in triumph (βιάζεται). I thus take βιάζεται (*contra inter alia* Davies & Allison 1991:256) as middle, not passive voice (*cf* Carson 1994:187), *in bonam partem*, and thus as equivalent in sense to Luke’s εὐαγγελίζεται (Luke 16:16). But what are we to make of the next clause? The difficulty arises because each of the two renderings of the clause which I would deem possible in the context are consistent with what Matthew says elsewhere about the kingdom.

(1) Consider first the proposal made by Carson (1994:187 *cf* 1984:267) that the construction ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν βιάζεται, καὶ βιασταὶ ἄρπάζουσιν αὐτήν is in fact an ‘antithetic

parallelism' containing a 'form of antanclasis (a figure of speech in which the same word is repeated in a different or even contradictory sense), based in this instance not on exactly the same word but on a cognate.' In this construction βιάζεται is taken as a middle (as above) and in a positive sense of the forceful advance of the kingdom, but the latter βιασταὶ ἀρπάζουσιν αὐτήν as 'conative present tense' with their 'normal evil connotations.'⁴¹ 'Simultaneous with the kingdom's advance, have been the attacks of violent men on it' (1984:267). This proposal does seem to fit the context, which has not only those who are apathetic to the kingdom present in the words and works of Jesus (Matthew 11:16-19), but the Pharisees who are hostile, in view.⁴² It also provides an apt answer to John the Baptist's question about the seemingly *ambiguous* nature of the kingdom's presence in Jesus (*see below*). One possible weak point is that the sense of ἀρπάζουσιν seems to be changed to 'opposition' if the kingdom itself is in view and only maintains its meaning of 'violent attack' if its object is the 'messengers of the kingdom' like the little ones who are Jesus' emissaries (10:16) or Jesus himself (*cf* 12:14). Matthew's αὐτήν which clearly refers to the kingdom, will have to be interpreted as 'the kingdom as represented in its messengers so that to attack the latter is to attack the former.' However such a view is by no means impossible and has a number of strengths.

(2) Consider, second, the possibility that the βιασταὶ are Matthew's equivalent of Luke's πᾶς who βιάζεται *into* (εἰς) the kingdom. The preposition εἰς surely implies a positive meaning for βιάζεται in Luke, but a question remains as to why such a word should be used to describe entry into the kingdom. Why should anyone need to 'force their way into the kingdom' or in Matthew's language, why should those who entering the kingdom be termed βιασταὶ *in bonam partem* and their mode of entry as ἀρπάζουσιν αὐτήν? David Seccombe in an unpublished article has argued that part of the answer lies in an allusion to the figure of Jacob, who is the *archetypal* βιαστής,

⁴¹ Carson (1984:266-67) points out that the noun βιαστής is 'rare in Greek literature (here only in NT), but where it occurs it always has the negative connotations of violence and rapacity' while ἀρπάζουσιν although 'fairly common almost always has the same evil connotations (a rare exception is Acts 8:39).' This is, in his opinion, conclusive evidence that the second half of the clause should be taken *in malem partem* and the entire clause as antithetical.

⁴² What is striking is that if this is the sense of βιασταὶ ἀρπάζουσιν αὐτήν, then Jesus by referring to both the apathetic and the violent opponents as τὴν γενεὰν ταύτην (11:16; 12:45 *cf* 12:39 and 23:36), includes both of them as the βιασταὶ *in malem partem*. Thus by the end of the gospel *both* the crowds *and* the officials are crying out for Jesus' crucifixion.

the one who wrestled with God and prevailed to receive a blessing and the name Israel (*cf* Genesis 32:22-30). But while the significance of Jacob would have been great both for Jesus (*cf* John 1:47-51) and within Judaism, it is in my opinion difficult to see the point of such an allusion at this juncture in Matthew's gospel. Furthermore Matthew 11:25 speaks of God revealing 'these things' to little children and 13:11 of the 'secrets of the kingdom' being *given* so that the idea of Jacob's wresting something from God seems against the context. Is it not better to suggest that the entire clause ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν βιάζεται, καὶ βιασταὶ ἄρπάζουσιν αὐτήν was found in Q, that it is suitable for Matthew's purpose and context (different to Luke's) to quote the whole in the sense set out in (1) above, and that Luke, conscious of the βιασταὶ as violent attackers of those who evangelise the kingdom and thus opponents of those who would enter, especially the religious outcasts, depicts the entry of the latter into the kingdom as βιάζεται, because it is the βιασταὶ that they must overcome. This leads us back to (1) above as the better interpretation of Matthew 11:12-13.

Fifth, we return briefly to the question of John the Baptist's own misunderstanding of Jesus' ministry. At one level, the misunderstanding is itself quite understandable for John has proclaimed in the person and work of Jesus the coming of the kingdom, the time of *fulfilment* which both he and the entire witness of the 'Prophets and the Law' prophesied. According to John's preaching this time of fulfilment was to mean both *salvation* and *judgement* (3:12). But until that time (ἕως ἄρτι - 11:12), although salvation was evident in the pressing forward of the kingdom in the words and works of Jesus, judgement seemed strangely absent - the βιασταὶ seemed to hold sway. Jesus' answer to John (vss 4-6), which as has frequently been pointed out⁴³ excludes the note of judgement which is in fact present in the Scriptural texts which Jesus quotes, is both rebuke and warning. John, like Jesus' other hearers must come to understand the course of salvation-history - salvation now, judgement later - and not stumble over Jesus' agenda.⁴⁴ To be scandalised by Jesus' agenda, far from being one of the poor (11:5) who are μακάριός and to

⁴³ See *inter alia* Davies & Allison (1991:244-46); Hagner (1993:301); Carson (1994:180-81).

⁴⁴ John's question to Jesus ironically contains the answer. He enquires whether Jesus is indeed the 'coming one' (ὁ ἐρχόμενος) or whether he and others must 'wait' (προσδοκῶμεν) for another. Hagner (1993: 301) points out that the verb προσδοκάω occurs only here and in Matthew 24:50 'in reference to the future parousia of Jesus'. For the reader who is aware of Jesus words in 24:50, the answer to John's question is in retrospect clear. John like others must 'wait' not for another one, but for another coming of the one who 'until now' allows the βιασταὶ to continue, but will not do so forever.

whom the kingdom belongs (*cf* 5:3), is in reality to become like the βίασται who at that time (ἔως ἄρτι) were permitted to oppose the kingdom in Jesus (11:12).

Sixth, we note that the term ἄρτι in vs 11 coincides with ‘story NOW’, the time of Jesus own speaking to the crowds rather than the ‘narrative NOW’ of the narrator, ie, Matthew’s time (*cf* Howell 1990:73 using Chatman 1975:9-10). But we also note that within Matthew’s narrative, this *time of Jesus* is itself nuanced by a distinctive temporal and thematic development. It is within the gradual unfolding of Matthew’s plot, rather than as formal structural markers,⁴⁵ ‘marking out a self conscious literary division of the work’ (France 1989:152), that temporal indicators like the five-fold Καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε ἐτέλεσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς (Matthew 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1) and the two-fold formula Ἀπὸ τότε ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς (Matthew 4:17; 16:21) play an important role. Thus by noting these alongside other narrative rhetorical devices, we recognize that the ‘advance of the kingdom’(11:12) during the life of Jesus has its own discreet phases and stages such as the limitations placed by Jesus on his own mission (15:24) and that of his disciples (10:6), as well as its own manifestations of *advance* and *opposition* which are likewise experienced both by Jesus’ emissaries and by Jesus himself. Such temporal and geographical boundedness (Strecker’s so-called historicizing) should not be taken as artificially imposed upon the narrative by Matthew or as inconsistent with what follows later, but rather as necessary stages in the kingdom’s advance throughout the lifetime of Jesus, culminating in his death and resurrection. And these events in turn become, as we shall see, the basis of a new beginning and new stage for the advance of the kingdom, one marked by the real if not corporate presence of the risen Jesus (see below) and the very real removal of geographical, national or temporal restrictions. Of particular importance here is the fact that as far as Old Testament expectations of the kingdom of God were concerned, the advance of that kingdom to the very ends of the earth was contingent upon the problem of Israel’s exile first being resolved. Thus the apparent contradiction between the nationalism of 10:6 and universalism of 28:16-20 can be understood as Matthew’s expression of what appears to have been a clear understanding of the course of salvation history within the primitive church - salvation is not only ‘from the Jews’ but ‘for the Jew first, and then for the Gentile’ (*cf* John 4:22, Romans 1:16) . We will return to this again in our discussion of Matthew’s plot and his use

⁴⁵On the structure of Matthew’s gospel see *inter alia* Bacon (1918:56-66); Lohr (1961:403-35); Krentz (1964:409-14); Green (1968:47-59); Kingsbury (1975:7-25); Combrink (1983: 61-90); Bauer (1988); Neirynck (1988:21-59); France (1989:141-53); Luz (1989:33-44); Allison (1992:1203-21); Hagner (1993:l-liii).

of the Old Testament.

To summarise our findings thus far, I take Matthew 11:1-18 to be teaching that it is Jesus and not John the Baptist who is the pivotal point in the history of salvation. With the advent of the Baptist, a key stage in the time of preparation had been reached and for that reason he was indeed the most significant figure in that period. But it is with the advent of Jesus during the days of John the forerunner, that the time of the kingdom is actually inaugurated.⁴⁶ With the coming of Jesus, the time of prophecy gives way to the time of fulfilment, a fulfilment which as we shall see in more detail when we discuss Matthew's use of the Old Testament, can be understood in 'end of exile' terms.⁴⁷ But the nature of this 'time of the kingdom' as a time of fulfilment must itself not be misunderstood. It is the time of the advance of the kingdom, but it is also a time during which this advance will be ignored and opposed. Jesus has come to end Israel's exile and to open the way for God's kingdom centred in Jesus to be established and to advance to the ends of the earth. But the reality of these events remains something hidden except for the remnant, the 'little children' to whom God reveals these things (Matthew 11:25). The full extent of the restoration that Jesus brings for both Jew and Gentile lies in the future.

4.3. *From now until(Matthew 23:39; 24:21).*

The words of Jesus in Matthew 11:12-13 identify two periods within Matthew's portrayal of salvation-history. The first of these is the period when 'all the Prophets and the Law prophecy' (11:13). This period lasts, in salvation-history terms, ἕως Ἰωάννου who is the most significant character of this period, for it is during his time that 'the coming one', ie, Jesus actually arrives. The second period is the period of the 'advance of the kingdom', a period initiated by the arrival of Jesus 'in the days of John' and, as far as Matthew 11 is concerned, lasting until 'now', ie, the *story now* coincidental with Jesus' words, the 'time of Jesus'. This period of 'kingdom advance'

⁴⁶ As I will argue in our discussion of the Plot of Matthew's Gospel, I take the formal beginning of Jesus' ministry to be not his public proclamation (4:17 - cf Kingsbury 1975) but his baptism by John in which he is publically anointed as the Son of God, Israel's king.

⁴⁷ This is clear not only from the association of John the Baptist with the preacher of Isaiah 40 in Matthew 3, but also from the identification of John with the messenger of Malachi 3 and the Elijah figure in Malachi 5. The context of Malachi is *post exilic*, but its message seems to imply that the return from Babylon had in fact not brought an end to the exile, at least in theological if not strictly geographical terms.

(ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν βιάζεται) is also a time of opposition and raises questions about the extent to which Jesus ushers in the kingdom of God during his own day. Put in terms of the idea of ‘restoration from exile’, the question remains as to the extent to which the exile is ended and the kingdom of God is established in Jesus. Two key passages in Matthew provide an answer to this question and it is to these that we now turn in a third and final look at Matthew’s salvation-history indicators.

The *first* of the indicators comes in Matthew 23:39 and forms the conclusion of a series of denunciations pronounced by Jesus concerning the teachers of the Law and the Pharisees. As we shall see elsewhere, these denunciations or *woes* reflect the language of Isaiah and should thus be taken alongside of the use of Isaiah 6:9, 10 in Matthew 13:14-15; Isaiah 29:13 in Matthew 15:8-9 and the phrase *this (evil) generation* (Matthew 11:16; 12:45; 23:35) to indicate that the nation of Jesus’ day as represented by the religious leaders were in fact just like the nation described in the first half of Isaiah (Isaiah 1-39) - a nation under threat of exile because of spiritual obduracy and refusal to hear the word of the Lord. This same threat is echoed in Jesus’ declaration regarding Jerusalem which, in keeping with its long history of rejecting and murdering those whom God had sent to it (23:37), had rejected Jesus and would soon become the site of his death also. Uttered within the ‘temple courts’ (21:23 *cf* 24:1), Jesus’ threat is stark and echoes the words of the prophets concerning Jerusalem and its temple - ἀφίεται ὑμῖν ὁ οἶκος ὑμῶν ἔρημος.⁴⁸ The parallels with Isaiah 64:10-11 (64:9-10 LXX) are striking. Because of the rejection of God’s continually outstretched hand by an obstinate people (Isaiah 65:2), the LORD had abandoned his people. The consequence was that ‘the sacred cities have become a desert, even Zion is a desert (ἔρημος), Jerusalem a desolation’, while the ‘holy and glorious temple’ where the fathers had praised ‘lies in ruins’ (Isaiah 64:10-11 NIV). Even more striking is Matthew’s placement of these words immediately prior to Jesus’ departure from the temple (24:1) and his prediction of the temple’s destruction. The desolation of the temple by the Babylonians had been preceded by the graphic departure of the Shekinah (*cf* Ezekiel 10:1-22). Furthermore, Matthew has already identified the

⁴⁸ Davies & Allison (1997:322) point to the debate regarding whether ‘your house’ in Matthew 23:38 refers to the temple, Jerusalem itself or ‘the house of Israel’. The Matthean context suggests the temple itself, but we should note the point ‘that Jewish texts - such as Ezra and 2 Baruch - do not always distinguish between the temple and the capital. Quite often the one implies the other and there are indiscriminate transitions from temple to city and *vice versa* so that one may often speak of their identification.’

‘presence of God’ with the presence of Jesus (1:23),⁴⁹ so that from his point of view it is quite appropriate to use a clause as strong as ἀφίεται ὑμῖν ὁ οἶκος ὑμῶν ἔρημος to describe Jesus’ *final* departure from the temple, at least as far as Matthew’s narrative is concerned.

That this final departure, prompted by the rejection of Jesus, is indeed in view is further substantiated by the words οὐ μή με ἴδῃτε ἀπ’ ἄρτι in Matthew 23:39. The term ἄρτι again refers to story time, ie Jesus’ present time, not that of the evangelist, but the phrase οὐ μή με ἴδῃτε implies the absence of Jesus, at least in corporal terms. Thus what is in view is a time beyond Jesus’ impending death and, in the light of 26:29 (see below), probably beyond his subsequent resurrection. Davies and Allison (1997:322) point out that the statement “‘You will not see’ is, so to speak, the antithesis of the parousia. If the Son of man’s resurrection means that he will no longer be seen...the parousia is when he will be seen again.’ That Jesus was not seen post resurrection by those designated as ‘Jerusalem’ in 23:39 is quite true, but it is in my opinion doubtful that the statement implies a contrast with the disciples who *do see* Jesus after the resurrection or that the resurrection is thus in Jesus’ mind. Surely it is better to take the *ascension* to be the antithesis of the *parousia*, not least because both employ the language and imagery of Daniel 7 and the ‘coming of the Son of Man on the clouds’. While it is true that neither Matthew nor the shorter version of Mark describe the actual ascension of Jesus in the way that Luke does, that does not mean that either of them were ignorant of the ascension or that the ascension is not referred to or implied. Certainly the ascension seems to me to be implied by the words of Jesus in Matthew 28:18, by the ‘absence of the master of the house’ in 24:45-47 and 25:14-19 and by the reference in 26:29 to Jesus ‘not drinking of the fruit of the vine’ with his disciples ἀπ’ ἄρτι until the consummation of the kingdom and the renewal of all things (see below). In the light of this, I take the statement οὐ μή με ἴδῃτε to be a reference to the ascension of Jesus.

What are we to make of ἕως ἄν εἴπητε? The statement Εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου is a quotation from Psalm 118, a Psalm that Matthew has already applied to Jesus as the ‘rejected cornerstone’ which will become a cause of destruction on the one hand, and yet the

⁴⁹ See the discussion by Davies and Allison (1991:789-90) regarding Jesus’ presence among ‘two or three who are gathered in his name’ as a Christian equivalent of the Rabbinic view that where ‘two sit together an the words of the Law (are spoken) between them, the Divine Presence rests between them....’ *Mishnah. ’Abot* 3.2 (Danby 1933:450; cf Neusner 1988:678).

centre of something new in God's kingdom on the other (Matthew 21:42-43). And it echoes the words spoken by the crowds and the disciples who accompanied Jesus at the time of the triumphal entry (Matthew 21:9), though significantly, Matthew distances the city of Jerusalem from this acclaim (21:10). In Psalm 118, the words are spoken in the context of a celebration of the LORD's unfailing love (vss1-4, 29) by those who have been rescued from their enemies on God's day of salvation (vs 24) by One who comes in the name of the LORD and who is praised from within the temple. In Matthew they are set in the context of one who has come to save his people from their sins (1:21) approaching first Jerusalem (21:9) and then the temple (21:12, 23) but receiving, not the praise and acclaim of the city and its leaders, but their rejection. In consequence the rejected King will depart and go to his death, thus achieving, ironically as we shall see, the salvation of 'his people'. But the city for its part will not see him again and will not only remain 'unsaved', but will face what would seem to be an even worse fate than their current condition (24:1 ff).

According to the words of Jesus in Matthew 23:29, that is however not the end of the story. For the 'absence of Jesus' will only be until the words which the city failed to apply to Jesus' *first* coming, are in fact applied to him at his *return*. And it is here that there is some dispute about the sense of Jesus' words.⁵⁰ Are we to take Jesus' Εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου to be the begrudging acknowledgement of a defeated opponent or the glad welcome of one who has come to share in salvation? The context of Psalm 118 and its reference to 'unfailing love' implies the latter, but what about Matthew's application of these words in the context of Jerusalem's rejection of Jesus and the impending destruction of the temple? Once again Davies and Allison are worth quoting. Referring to the disputed sense of the words they point out that 'the text means not that when the Messiah comes, his people will bless him, but rather, when his people bless him, the Messiah will come' (1997:323). This means that although the rejection of Jesus, God's chosen stone, has serious consequences for Israel and its position of privilege within salvation history (Matthew 21:43 *cf* Matthew 8:11,12), these consequences do not preclude hope for those within Israel who in the time of Jesus physical absence, are willing to acknowledge that Jesus is indeed God's chosen cornerstone, the locus of God's blessing and rest. Thus although the command to

⁵⁰ *Cf* the discussion and bibliography in *inter alia* Davies and Allison (1997:323-325); Hagner (1995:678-810) and Carson (1984:486-88).

disciple all nations marks a universalization of a previously restricted mission, it does not imply the abandonment of the mission to the ‘lost sheep of Israel’ or its ultimate failure. Whether we concur with this view or not however, what is clear from the above discussion is that Matthew 23:29 designates a third period within Matthew’s schema of salvation-history, a period which lasts from the ascension of Jesus until his return, a period which as chapters such as Matthew 24 and 25 describe will also be a time of the kingdom’s advance and opposition just as the time of Jesus had been, with the notable exception that the nature of Jesus presence with his *church militant* will be quite different from what it had been.

A similar perspective emerges from the *second* salvation-historical indicator viz Matthew 26:29, a text to which we will return again in greater detail as part of our discussion of Matthew’s use of the Old Testament. For our present purposes we note that this statement by Jesus comes in the context of betrayal and imminent death and that it looks forward to the period of the consummation of the kingdom of God. Jesus claims that he will once again drink ‘the fruit of the vine’, but that such drinking anew with his disciples (αὐτὸ πίνω μεθ’ ὑμῶν καινὸν) will be delayed from now (ἀπ’ ἄρτι) until that day (ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης). Once again the negative οὐ μὴ πῖω implies *physical absence* so that although the ἄρτι does refer to the story time of Jesus’ words, it does look beyond the time of Jesus physical presence with his disciples.⁵¹ There are close similarities between Matthew and Mark, although Matthew has his characteristic ἀπ’ ἄρτι for Mark’s οὐκέτι, τοῦ πατρός μου for Mark’s θεοῦ and adds the phrase μεθ’ ὑμῶν, a phrase which in 18:20 and 28:20 refers to Jesus’ immanence with his disciples, but here in fact points forward to a future presence ‘on that day’. The phrase ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης is shared by Matthew and Mark (Luke simply has ἕως οὗ ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἔλθῃ) and is eschatological in tone. This is clear both from Matthew’s use of ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης elsewhere in his gospel⁵² and from the notion of *newness* (καινὸν) which I take to be commensurate with the implied newness of the covenant (see later) and the new age of the kingdom, celebrated by eating and drinking in the very

⁵¹ Indeed it is the reality of this *impending physical absence* which no doubt required Jesus to underline in Matthew 28:20 that in the light of his new position of authority, his absence from his disciples would not be absolute but rather only physical.

⁵² Despite the argument of Kingsbury (1975), the plural phrase ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις often simply means ‘at that time’. But the same is not true for the singular which is used in Matthew as an equivalent for ‘on the day of judgement’ See Matthew 7:21-23 cf 11:24; 24:36 as opposed to 24:19, 22, 38 (*contra* Davies & Allison 1988:714).

presence of God the father. What Jesus has in mind is the time of the consummation, the time for which he taught his disciples to pray saying Πάτερ ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, ἁγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου· ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου· γεινηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου, ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς.

What is important for the purposes of our discussion of salvation-history in Matthew is that both 23:39 and 26:29 describe the same period, a period lasting *from now* (ἀπ' ἄρτι) which though at first glance indicates the time of Jesus physical presence with his disciples, in fact refers in the light of the negatives 'not see' and 'not drink', to the time of his physical departure from them, *until that day* (ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης), the time of the parousia and the consummation of the kingdom.

5. Conclusion

Our brief survey of Matthew's use of the temporal expression ἀπὸ...ἕως has led us to identify two clear cut schemas of salvation history within Matthew's gospel. The first of these, found within the genealogy and summarised as 'from Abraham to David, from David to the exile, from the exile to the Christ', provides a *historical-theological backdrop* against which Matthew's story of Jesus is to be read and understood. It places the entire story of Jesus from birth through life, focussed in word and deed, to death and resurrection within the context of a bigger story - the story of God's dealings with the human race via Abraham and his descendants the nation of Israel, most notably the royal line of Judah from whom is descended Jesus the son of David, the Messiah.

The second schema of salvation-history which the reader, alerted to Matthew's historical-theological periodizations and his use of ἀπὸ...ἕως picks up during the course of reading, is the three-fold division of salvation-history into (1) the period of prophecy, 'all the Prophets and the Law' up till and including the preaching of John the Baptist; (2) the period of the kingdom's advance and conflict from the advent of Jesus in the 'days of John' until 'now' ie, the now of Jesus' own story time, what was referred to in salvation-history as 'the time of Jesus'; (3) The period from the 'now' of Jesus' story time, but particularly the end of that time in his departure, until the consummation of the kingdom at the parousia of Jesus.

It is in particular during the latter two periods of salvation-history that Matthew's story of Jesus and the coming of the 'kingdom of the heavens' unfolds. But it does so against the backdrop of the first period - the *time of prophecy*- a time which in the light of Matthew 1:17 must be seen with particular reference to the promises to Abraham and David, promises which the exile has all but destroyed, but which with the coming of Jesus the Messiah are being brought to fulfilment. Nor should the latter two periods despite their distinction as far as the nature of Jesus' presence be seen as fundamentally distinct, for they are both part of the '*time of the kingdom*', a time of the advance of the kingdom in the midst of opposition to it.

Significant within both of these schemas, although largely neglected within the scholarly literature, is the notion of exile and restoration. It is, as we have already noted, explicit in Matthew 1:17. But it occurs again in the other texts - both in terms of the figure of John the Baptist and his role as the voice of Isaiah 40 and the Messenger of Malachi 3, and primarily in relation to Jesus as the one who ushers in the time of the kingdom for, as we will see later, talk of the kingdom and the coming of the kingdom did not take place within a vacuum but against the backdrop of an intense eschatological longing that God would finally bring about what the prophets had promised. But the reality of Jesus' rejection by Israel puts an interesting 'spin' on the notions of exile and restoration. Matthew presents Jesus as the one who really did usher in the time of the fulfilment 'all that the prophets and the Law prophesied.' Put in other words, he brought an end to the exile for those who come to him, become his disciples and thus find rest for their souls. (*cf* Matthew 11:28-30). This restoration opens the door for the world-wide spread of the kingdom, so that, at the consummation of the kingdom, those who share in the kingdom may indeed include people from east and west (*cf* Matthew 8:11). But it also implies that those who reject Jesus and the rest he offers must necessarily remain 'in exile' - a reality graphically portrayed by Jesus' prediction of another destruction of the temple. And if their rejection of Jesus remains to the end, then it implies a final exile from the kingdom of God, an exile from which there is no return (*cf* Matthew 8:12; *cf* Isaiah 66:24).

Chapter 4. Exile, Restoration and the Plot of Matthew's Gospel

1. Introduction

The discussion of *plot* in connection with the study of the gospels, though increasingly common in more recent so-called literary approaches to the gospels, is nevertheless a relatively new¹ and by no means a universally accepted phenomenon.² While some of this reticence may be ascribed to an innate conservatism among Biblical scholars, a good deal of it involves more fundamental questions. For some the questions concern the issue of basic methodology. Are the methods of modern literary criticism,³ particularly those methods developed for the study of works of fiction, entirely appropriate for the study of ancient documents such as the gospels?⁴ Of particular interest here is the question of the *genre* of the gospels, a subject which strikingly enough 'has not been prominent in recent literary studies of Matthew' (Stanton 1992a:59).⁵ For others there is concern over the implications of the method. What should we make of the much-vaunted dichotomy between the *poetic* and *referential* function of gospel texts and the related

¹ Writing in 1992, Mark Allan Powell could say that 'the actual work of describing the plots of our various Gospels has *only just begun* [italics mine]' (1992b:187). See also Powell (1990:1-10; 1992a:341-346) and Riches (1996:8). Note however the observation by Stanton (1992a:55) that 'since 1984...perhaps as many as half the scholarly books and articles published in English on Matthew have been written from literary perspectives.'

² See e.g. Stanton (1992a:54-59). For a balanced appraisal of the issues see Powell (1990:85-101).

³ By literary criticism in this chapter I am referring to the various methods of secular literary criticism in their application to the study of the Bible and not to the older literary criticism which was most often taken as synonymous with historical criticism in general and with source criticism in particular. See however the comments of Powell (1990:12) which direct attention to Abrams' description of *expressive*, *pragmatic*, *objective* and *mimetic* types of criticism as preferable nomenclature (Abrams 1981).

⁴ See Stanton (1992a:6,56). In this connection the comments of Howell (1990:110-11) are particularly insightful: 'It is certainly true that the evangelists were not at complete liberty to create events or characters as they wrote...Therefore the task of an author of fiction is different from that of the historian or evangelist. Yet the similarities between their respective tasks should not be overlooked. The evangelist had to shape these events into a coherent story with a discernable beginning middle and end. This structuring process is the plot of the gospel and it is the reason why the four Gospels are each distinct even though the evangelists tell essentially the same story. In other words, each evangelist 'emplots' the events which he narrates in order to tell his story in a particular way, to interpret and give the significance of what he tells.'

⁵ See however Shuler (1982) and Kingsbury (1988:9-13) who are both singled out by Stanton (1992a:59 note1) as exceptions to this general rule. The expectation that literary critical studies should address the question of the *genre* of the gospels arises from the literary critical interest in the form and the *poetics* of texts.

tension between so-called *narrative world* and *real world*? Has narrative criticism in reaction against historical criticism's perceived failure to give full weight to the text as a whole in its form and effects, itself become an over-reaction in which the words and deeds of Jesus become a mere vehicle for the evangelist's point of view? And speaking of *point of view*, what, if anything, can be said about the theological significance of the gospels? Must *point of view* necessarily replace *theology* or is there, to quote the apostle Paul somewhat out of context, 'a better way' by which narrative critics and redaction critics can work in mutual service? (cf Moore 1989:56-68).

These and others are important issues which, as may be expected, have received and continue to receive extensive attention, especially as the methods of such approaches as narrative criticism begin to impact the study of the gospels and other biblical narrative texts more and more.⁶ For the purposes of this present chapter though, they must be left to one side, with the exception of a restatement of the observation made in our introductory chapter that an *either/or* approach which sets literary considerations over and against historical and theological ones seems not to be in the best interests of an *inclusive* and *comprehensive* approach to the interpretation of the gospels.⁷ However, while fully concurring with Vernon Robbins (1996:18-20) that texts are better thought of as 'thick tapestries' rather than simply as 'windows' or 'mirrors' and that therefore 'interpretation is more like a ritual than a single act', it is nevertheless inevitable and often necessary that a particular facet of the texture of a text be focussed upon in greater detail. The present chapter on the plot of Matthew's gospel which is predominantly but not exclusively an investigation of what Robbins has termed the 'inner texture' of Matthew's gospel, should be seen as just such a detailed focus and should therefore not be viewed as an attempt to single out this particular aspect of the study of the gospel as more important than or ultimately separable from

⁶ For an excellent treatment of the theoretical and practical aspects of literary criticism and its impact on the study of the gospels see especially Moore (1989). His work provides an invaluable history of the development of literary critical approaches to the interpretation of the gospels until the late 1980's as well as a critical evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of various works. Of particular importance is his observation that Biblical scholars have tended to apply the methods of literary criticism without always fully appropriating its theoretical arguments, a weakness which Moore himself does not emulate. See also Beardslee (1969:1-13); Petersen (1978:9-48); Powell (1990:1-21).

⁷ See the comments of Wright (1992); Thiselton (1992); Osborne (1991) and more recently Robbins (1996). While each of the former specify the importance of a comprehensive approach with Wright in particular seeking to apply such a comprehensive approach to the study of the gospels (Wright 1992, 1996), it is only in the *socio-rhetorical criticism* applied by Vernon Robbins that an attempt is made to devise a thoroughgoing integrated method. (Robbins 1996:1-43). See also Stanton (1992a:1-107) and Matera (1987:234).

any other (*cf* Stanton 1992a:58).

With these general comments in mind then we turn our attention to a discussion of the plot of Matthew's gospel and its relationship to the question of exile and restoration.

2. The Plot of Matthew's Gospel

2.1. *Recent Studies of the Plot of Matthew's Gospel*

One of the scholars who has done a great deal in recent years to promote a narrative critical approach to the gospels is Mark Allan Powell. Although Powell has been quick to give credit to those who pioneered the approach in earlier years (Powell 1990:1-10), his own work on narrative criticism in general (1990) and Matthew's gospel in particular (1990:44-50; 1992a:341-346; 1992b:187-204) have been of enormous help to those attempting to come to grips with the method. Turning his attention in 1992 to a study of *The Plot and Subplots of Matthew's Gospel*, Powell observed that 'Narrative criticism has called our attention to the fact that Gospels have plots. Still, the actual work of describing the plots of various gospels has only just begun' (1992b:187). Powell's own declared purpose in his article was '....to further that project with respect to the Gospel of Matthew....', a purpose which he set about achieving by reviewing and critiquing work done thus far, in particular the work of Edwards (1985), Matera (1987) and Kingsbury (1988), and then offering 'a more precise formulation than has been proposed previously' (1992b:187).

Powell's begins this more precise formulation by refining Edwards' concept of plot as 'narrative flow' (Edwards 1985:9) in the light of Chatman's definition of plot as 'story as discoursed' (Chatman 1978:3). This serves to add the notion of depth⁸ to the understanding of plot. The inclusion of this dimension in the definition of plot is important for a number of reasons. First, it facilitates our grasp of the very important *rhetorical* function of plot at the level of both author

⁸ By 'depth' I mean what Powell (1992b:188) in language drawn from structuralism calls the *paradigmatic* as opposed to the *syntagmatic* relationships within the text.

and reader.⁹ Plot involves far more than simply recounting events. It is, as we shall see below, also concerned with the reason for the events and the consequences which they have. But included within this is the invitation which ‘the story as discoursed’ extends to the reader to embrace the evaluative point of view presented within the narrative¹⁰ and to respond appropriately. The story is not simply told for its own sake but for effect.¹¹ Second, this refinement of plot facilitates a weighted reading of the text in which some events are given greater significance than others¹² and where temporal priority does not necessarily imply hermeneutical priority.¹³ Third, this in turn facilitates a more measured assessment of *time* and *causality* in relation to emplotment. It is in relation to these that Powell is critical of the work of Frank Matera (1987:233-53).

Matera (1987:234-36) describes his work as ‘modest proposal that attention to plot...can provide NT students with a helpful view of the gospels as stories’ carried out with the conviction that ‘plot analysis should [not] replace careful redactional study...but can supplement and sharpen its focus.’ He then goes on to define the concept of plot in terms of both *time* and *causality* and in particular ‘how the discourse arranges events by time and causality in order to produce a particular affective or emotional response.’ In his study, Matera applies Chatman’s definition of kernels and satellites to identify and describe major and minor events in Matthew’s gospel (Chatman 1978:53-56) and to identify ‘narrative blocks’, pointing out that the ‘recognition of kernels and narrative blocks is important because it reveals how the plot develops’ (1987:238).

⁹ For the majority of Narrative Critics the terms *author* and *reader* refer exclusively to the *implied author* and *implied reader* which are of course functions of the text. Powell (1990:5-6) has rightly pointed out that ‘distinctions of this sort become less important in studies of the New Testament Gospels since no two of these works have the same author and there is no reason to believe that the real authors did not fully accept the ideas expressed in their books.’ But even in the case of the Gospels the concepts are of value for the precise socio-historical setting of the gospels remains a matter of conjecture.

¹⁰ It is of course true that the point of view espoused by the narrator does not always cohere with that of the implied author. This is however not the case with the gospels.

¹¹ Of particular interest here is the chapter ‘The form of the Gospel’ in Beardslee (1969:14-29). See also Matera (1987:236,240); Powell (1990:14-15; 1992b:188-89); Howell (1990:93-96).

¹² Of particular importance here are the observations of Barthes (as presented by Chatman (1978:53-56)) regarding *kernels* and *satellites*. See also Matera (1987:236-38). Powell (1990:36) does not share either Chatman’s or Matera’s optimism that the *kernels* are self-evident.

¹³ See Powell (1990:36-38); *cf* Genette (1980).

In summary, Matera makes four observations about plot: 'First, plot is an organizing principle which gives logic and meaning to disparate events. Second, discourse organizes events according to the categories of time and causality. In terms of time, the conclusion of the narrative is of paramount importance. In terms of causality, the relationship between events and the final affective response the narrative endeavours to produce must be taken into account. Third not all events are equal....Fourth, plot organizes events into larger narrative blocks'(1987:240). In Powell's words, Matera describes plot in terms of 'narrative logic' (Powell 1992b:189).

Applying these basic principles with regard to emplotment and working from Crane's premise that the 'form of the plot is a first principle, which [the critic] must grasp as clearly as possible in any work ...before he can deal adequately with the question raised by the parts' (1961:67), Matera proposes a preliminary description of Matthew's plot as follows: 'In the appearance of Jesus the Messiah, God fulfills his promises to Israel. But Israel refuses to accept Jesus as the Messiah. Consequently, the Gospel passes to the nations.' Matera then uses this preliminary description to identify six 'kernels' which bring the narrative to this conclusion *viz* The birth of Jesus (2:1a), The beginning of Jesus' ministry (4:12-17), The question of John the Baptist (11:2-6), Jesus' conversation at Caesarea Philippi (16:13-28), The cleansing of the Temple (21:1-17) and the Great Commission (28:20-16) (1987:244-45). These six kernels in turn give rise to six 'narrative blocks' which when examined more closely lead to a more refined description of Matthew's plot. Thus, according to Matera, 'Matthew's gospel can be read as a story whose plot concerns Israel's rejection of the Messiah and the consequent movement of the gospel to the Gentiles' (1987:252-53).

While acknowledging the value of Matera's contribution to the discussion of Matthew's plot, Powell is, as we noted above, critical of Matera's work in two particular and related areas, *viz* the application of the concepts of time and causality with regard to emplotment.

First, although Powell is willing to concur with Matera (and others) that 'identification of causality is significant for plot analysis' (1992b:190), he is unpersuaded by Matera's application

to Matthew's gospel of Goodman's concept of 'strict causality.'¹⁴ While Powell acknowledges that 'some narratives move toward resolution via a pattern of possibility-probability-contingency' he points out that 'many do not' (1992b:190). And this, in his view, is the case with Matthew. Although Matthew, like the other synoptics, is basically *episodic*, there are clearly numerous cases of cause and effect within Matthew's gospel, even where these are not explicitly identified. Thus, for example, in Matthew 12:1-14 the plot to kill Jesus (vs 14) while mentioned in the immediate context of the healing on the Sabbath (vs 13) is in fact caused by Jesus' claim in vs 8 to be 'Lord of the Sabbath' and the perceived blasphemy inherent within such a claim (*cf* 26:62-66). But is it appropriate to apply this strict causality to the gospel as a whole so that the final event (see below) becomes *the key event* in a retrospective series of cause and effect relationships and hence to the plot of the gospel? To put it the other way round, is it not possible that the 'use of Goodman's outline in a study of Matthew's plot may prejudice the investigation from the outset' (Powell 1992b:190) and lead to the neglect of other aspects of the narrative which are equally or perhaps even more important for the development of the overall plot?¹⁵ Powell's counter proposal is that in Matthew's gospel we in fact have to do with a 'teleologically determined' plot in which events 'do not occur because of preceding events but happen because other events must happen. The 'end institutes the means' instead of the other way round'(1992b:190).¹⁶ We shall return to this question of *causality* again below.

Second, and closely related, is Powell's observation that in Matthew the effective 'ending' for Matthew's story and consequent resolution of the Gospel's plot is not found in Matthew

¹⁴ See Goodman (1954:14) quoted in Matera (1987:239) and Powell (1992b:190): 'In the beginning, anything is possible; in the middle, things become probable; in the ending, everything is necessary.' See also Chatman (1978:47).

¹⁵ It thus seems to me to be extraordinary that Matera can, even when discussing *the birth of Jesus*, entirely ignore Matthew 1:21 and 1:23 which are, in my opinion, of no small significance for the plot of the gospel.

¹⁶ This view is as we shall see elsewhere consistent with Matthew's regular use of πληρωθῆναι as well as the use of δεῖν in Matthew 16:21, which in addition to 4:17, is a key verse for the *narrative flow* of Matthew's gospel (*cf* Powell 1992b:193; Kingsbury 1988:40), another important consideration in the investigation of the plot of a narrative text.

28:16-20 as Matera has argued,¹⁷ but is in fact what has been described as a ‘penultimate phenomenon.’¹⁸ Matera’s conclusion in this regard is in fact closely related to his particular definition of plot, which while somewhat eclectic, is at the temporal level strongly influenced not only by Aristotle’s oft repeated reference to plots having ‘a beginning, a middle and an end’,¹⁹ but also by the work of Kermode (1967:46) whom he quotes as saying ‘all such plotting presupposes and requires that an end will bestow upon the whole duration and meaning.’ Thus Matera says ‘it is the ending, the close of narrative time, which aids the reader to discern the plot’ (1987:239) and again ‘in terms of time, the ending of the narrative is of paramount importance’ (1987:241). Given this temporal evaluation of the Great Commission as the ‘climax of the entire gospel’ (1987:245), Matera then sets about describing the way in which the Great Commission is also the point at which the plot is finally resolved. But as Powell correctly points out ‘the effective ending of a narrative’s story and the actual ending of its discourse need not coincide’ (1992b:191). Indeed when one looks more closely at the Great Commission it reads more like a new beginning than an ending and, as Matera (1987:245) himself admits, ‘raises yet another crux. Will the gospel be preached to the nations?’ This fact can be even more clearly seen if one bears in mind that the temporal boundaries within Matthew extend from creation (e.g. 19:4) to the ‘end of the ages’ (28:20), so that the narrative inevitably ‘includes’ those who then and now are seeking to be faithful to the commission of the Risen Jesus (cf. Howell 1990:92-96).

But if the Great Commission is not to be taken as the climax of the narrative and the point of plot resolution, where is this point then to be located? By looking more closely at the ‘temporal aspects of narration’ (1992b:193) and applying the distinction drawn *inter alia* by Genette (1980)

¹⁷ ‘In the appearance of Jesus the Messiah, God fulfils his promises to Israel. But Israel refuses to accept Jesus as the Messiah. Consequently the Gospel passes to the nations’ (Matera 1987:243).

¹⁸ In this connection Powell sights the work on the different functions of narrative endings in Parsons, M. 1987. *The Departure of Jesus in Luke-Acts: The Ascension Narratives in Context*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 66-72 and the comments on the book of Ruth by Berlin, A. 1983. *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*. Sheffield: Almond Press.

¹⁹ Aristotle *Poetics* 7.2-7: ‘...A whole is what has a beginning and middle and end. A beginning is that which is not a necessary consequent of anything else but after which something else exists or happens as a natural result. An end on the contrary is that which is inevitably or, as a rule, the natural result of something else but from which nothing else follows, a middle follows something else and something else follows from it....’ (Loeb) In these terms however, not even the Great Commission is strictly speaking an end, for as Matera himself observes, although in the gospel of Matthew it has no satellites, ‘it is an ending which has a new beginning: the Gentile mission. It raises another crux. Will the gospel be preached to the nations?’ (Matera 1987:245).

between 'story time' and 'discourse time' with regard to 'such matters as order, duration and frequency' to the narrative flow of Matthew's gospel, Powell observes that 'two sets of events may be identified as distinctive' (1992b:194, *cf* 1990:45). First, says Powell, 'the great speeches that Jesus gives are remarkable for the amount of discourse time devoted to them.'²⁰ 'Second', he continues, 'the events of Matthew's passion narrative are also presented in ways that make them stand out from the rest of the gospel. Once again the 'speed' of the narrative slows considerably and far more attention is given to detail than in the rest of the story.' Thus in terms of *duration*, the great speeches and the passion narrative 'have a significance not ascribed to other events' in the story. Furthermore, says Powell, 'it is noteworthy that the two events given emphasis in the discourse time of this narrative correspond to the two types of events mentioned in the explicit indicators of narrative flow' *viz* 4:17 (preaching) and 16:21 (passion),²¹ a fact which further suggests that these events are 'uniquely significant to Matthew's plot' (1992b:194). If we then further take into account that the events of the passion in particular 'are referred to more frequently than any others, often in contexts that are 'out of order' in terms of story time' (1992b:194), that the most striking occurrences of 'internal prolepses' within Matthew are the three explicit predictions of the death and resurrection of Jesus (16:21; 17:22-23; 20:17-19) and that Matthew's story contains numerous allusions and other references to hostility to Jesus and thus to his inevitable death (e.g. 2:7-18; 12:14; 14:1-12 *cf* 17:12), then it would appear that it is the passion narrative which is particularly significant for the resolution of the plot of Matthew's gospel. This preliminary conclusion is further substantiated according to Powell 'when the principle of causation is applied to Matthew' for it is then that we clearly see that 'the events of the passion narrative become significant in a way that the great speeches do not' (1990:45-46).

Two key things are involved in appreciating how causality functions within Matthew's gospel. The first, as we noted briefly earlier, is that we 'free ourselves from the prejudice that expects

²⁰ Powell (1990:45) observes that these speeches are 'premier examples of what Genette calls scenes, instances in which the duration of the discourse slows to approximate the actual expenditure of time in the story.' Although there is some dispute concerning the alternating pattern of discourse and narrative since it can quite justifiably be argued that the 'discourses are part of the narrative', five such discourses have traditionally been identified.

²¹ These verses should not be taken as formal structural markers as much as key transition points in the flow of the narrative. See Powell's cautionary comments regarding an over rigid view of structural arrangement (1992b:194).

to find the final effect of Matthew's causal developments resolved in the last few sentences of the narrative' (Powell 1992b:195). The second is that we recognise that within Matthew's story of Jesus there are three key moments (1:21; 9:13; 20:28) when 'a voice that the reader regards as reliable offers a direct statement concerning the events that are unfolding', thus giving 'the narrative flow of Matthew's gospel a sense of narrative logic as well' (Powell 1992b:195). We will return to the significance of these explicit statements of purpose again later. For the moment we simply note their content and relationship. In 1:21 an angel identifies Jesus as the one who 'will save his people from their sins'; in 9:13 Jesus describes himself as one who has come to 'call sinners'; and in 20:28 as the one who has come 'to give his life as a ransom for many.' The link in terms of narrative logic between the three suggests, as we shall see again later, not only who 'his people' are, but how they will be 'saved' (1:21) viz by 'calling sinners' (9:13) and 'giving his life as a ransom for many' (20:28). Furthermore, in 9:13 and 20:28 we come face to face again with the twin events of *preaching* and *passion* which we have already identified as critical for an understanding of Matthew's plot. But these two events are, as Powell points out, also 'causally related to each other: Jesus' ministry of calling sinners is what causes him to be rejected and ultimately crucified' (1992b:195-96). This fact suggests that 'the passion narrative provides a more ultimate resolution to Matthew's plot than that initially provided by the account of Jesus' ministry' (1992b:196). If we add to this as Powell notes elsewhere (1990:46) that a 'great many' of the statements which establish causal links between events in Matthew's gospel 'ultimately link events to Jesus' death on the cross'²² then it seems correct to conclude with Powell (*contra* Matera) that 'the passion narrative...is the goal of the entire narrative' (1990:46) and the point at which its plot is resolved.

The *third* aspect of Matera's work that is questioned by Powell is the assumption that 'plot can be understood in terms of a single story line' (1992b:191). Such an assumption reflects according to Powell a somewhat naive expectation that 'all the varying events or episodes of Matthew's narrative... connect meaningfully in terms of a single plot line.' Powell goes on to point out that narratives contain a number of sub-plots which 'though related to the main plot,

²² See the discussion in Powell (1990:46) and the list of examples cited there. See also the reference in Powell to Bauer (1988:73-108) who argues that 'the entire section of Matthew that deals [primarily] with Jesus ministry to Israel (4:17-16:20) is related to that section which deals with the passion and resurrection (16:21-28:20) on the basis of causation.'

develop tangentially and possess a certain integrity of their own' (1992b:192). According to Powell these subplots emerge by noting a third aspect of Matthew's plot development viz that of *conflict resolution*. In this area he is indebted to the observations of Kingsbury in his narrative critical analysis aptly entitled *Matthew as Story* (Kingsbury 1988).

It is hardly surprising in the light of his earlier work on Matthew (Kingsbury 1975) that Kingsbury gives significant attention to *temporal sequence*²³ within Matthew's gospel, both in relation to the overall structure of Matthew's gospel and the systematic unfolding of the narrative (Kingsbury 1988:3, 40-42). Nor is he unaware of the significance of factors such as *causality*, *characterization*, *settings* and *point of view* (1988:9-30). But the element which, according to Kingsbury, is 'central to the plot of Matthew' (1988:3), indeed on which Matthew's plot 'turns' (1992:347) is the element of conflict. Kingsbury rightly acknowledges the plurality of conflicts within Matthew's narrative, for example, Jesus' conflict 'with Satan (4:1-11), demons (12:28), the forces of nature and of illness, civil authorities (such as Herod and Pilate)' and 'Gentiles (including Roman soldiers)....' (1988:3). But his conclusion is 'that the conflict on which the plot of Matthew's story turns is that between Jesus and Israel' (1988:4), 'especially between Jesus and the religious authorities' (1992:347). This conflict is, as we shall see below, of course something which develops gradually and intensifies as the narrative progresses. The crowd by and large seem well disposed to Jesus right up until the time of his arrest, so that when the crowds appear with Judas to arrest Jesus (26:47) the reader is indeed taken by surprise (*cf* Kingsbury 1988:4). In retrospect though the reader can recall what Kingsbury calls 'warning passages' along the way which implicate the crowd and expose their propensity to view Jesus from a purely human point of view, a point of view that however stands in marked contrast to God's view of Jesus (1988:4).²⁴ In contrast to the crowd where the issue seems to be ignorance and consequent weakness, the religious leaders are Jesus 'implacable adversaries' and their conflict with Jesus is 'to the death' (Kingsbury 1988:5). Here we note that although 'Jesus'

²³ This attention to temporal flow is of course also axiomatic to a narrative critical analysis of Matthew. While plot is more than 'flow of narrative' it is certainly not less! See Powell (1992b:188); Kingsbury (1988:3).

²⁴ E.g. Matthew 2:3; 8:10-13; 9:23-25a; 10:1-42; 11:7, 16-19; 13:10-15; 16:13-14. As Kingsbury says 'the effect of these passages is to lead the reader to anticipate that Jesus will not, finally, succeed in winning the crowds over to his side' (1988:4). See also Kingsbury (1988:24-25).

conflict with the religious leaders is invariably grave, the factor that changes dramatically as one moves through the story is the level of tension. At the beginning this is at a low ebb, but after a time it raises perceptibly.’ Thus Kingsbury (1988:5-9) analyses the conflict through the three parts of the story *viz* 1:1-4:16; 4:17-16:20 and 16:21-28:20. In Part One, we are told, ‘the reader senses only imperfectly the tension that will later tax so severely Jesus’ relationship with the religious leaders’; in Part Two ‘the reader looks on as the tension between Jesus and the religious leaders mounts until it reaches the breaking point’ (*cf* 12:14); finally, in Part Three, ‘the reader observes the conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders run its course to resolution.’ It is, says Kingsbury (1988:7-8), ‘from the passion account itself [that] the reader learns of the resolution of Jesus’ conflict with the religious leaders.’ Ironically at the cross both Jesus and the religious leaders appear ‘to achieve the same goal, but with contradictory motivations.’ It is God however who ‘ultimately decides the conflict between them. By raising Jesus from the dead and investing him with all authority, God vindicates Jesus and thus decides the conflict in his favour.’ Thus although Kingsbury sees the death of Jesus as ‘the primary resolution’ of the conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders, he does not divorce it from the resurrection, but sees the two as intimately linked. Likewise the conflict between Jesus and the disciples is resolved, says Kingsbury, when the risen Jesus finally ‘gathers’ his ‘scattered’ brothers (28:10, 26:31-32) and brings them to understand the truth that ‘servanthood is the essence of discipleship’ (1988:9; *cf* 90-92), the very point that they failed to see with reference to Jesus’ prediction of his death. But it is as the crucified yet risen Lord that he does so (28:5-6), so that here, as in the case of the religious leaders, the cross and resurrection are closely linked in the resolution of the conflict. Thus although Kingsbury can refer to Matthew 28:16-20 as the ‘major climax’ of Matthew’s entire story (1988:91), he does not fall into the trap that Matera does of downplaying the significance of the passion narrative or the resurrection in the process.

Powell, a former student of Kingsbury, is quick to acknowledge the latter’s contribution to a more precise description of Matthew’s plot not least by noting that ‘given the development of conflict along more than one axis, Matthew’s plot cannot be described in terms of a single correlative chain of events’ (1992b:193).²⁵ But his conclusion regarding the primary conflict in

²⁵ *Cf* Kingsbury’s observation that the various conflicts within Matthew’s gospel occur at different levels and are resolved in different ways (Kingsbury 1988:3-9).

Matthew's story is rather different from that of Kingsbury.²⁶ Noting the fact that Jesus apparently loses the conflict both with the religious leaders (in the crucifixion) and with his own disciples (by their abandonment of him at the crucial moment), Powell asks whether such an 'extremely negative' conflict resolution, while appropriate to a tragedy, is indeed appropriate to a 'Gospel.' Clearly, he argues, this is not the case, a fact as we noted above that Kingsbury himself tacitly acknowledges when he concludes that in the end, God resolves the conflict in Jesus' favour by 'raising Jesus from the dead and investing him with all authority' (1988:8). But this appears to move the point of conflict resolution away from the passion narrative, a perspective which, as we have already seen, Powell is loathe to accept.²⁷

Powell's solution to this dilemma is to maintain the passion narrative as the point of conflict resolution while at the same time drawing on Kingsbury's observation that the various conflicts within Matthew's gospel occur at different levels and are resolved in different ways (Kingsbury 1988:3-9). As a result he concludes (*contra* Kingsbury) 'that neither Jesus' conflict with the religious leaders nor his conflict with his own disciples is ultimately definitive of Matthew's plot. What this narrative is really about is conflict on a deeper level, conflict between God and Satan' (1992b:198). Powell acknowledges that 'the conflict is not presented as God vs Satan *per se*, for that would be no contest.' His conclusion is that the primary conflict in Matthew's gospel is the conflict between '*God at work in Jesus*'²⁸ and '*Satan*.' It is around this primary conflict that the main plot of Matthew's gospel turns. The conflicts between *Jesus and the religious leaders* and

²⁶ For a later and slightly modified statement of his views see Kingsbury (1992:347-356).

²⁷ It is fair to say that in his treatment of Kingsbury's views of the resolution of conflict in Matthew, Powell has perhaps not given full weight to Kingsbury's close linking of the cross, resurrection and Great Commission. Kingsbury distinguishes between the *cross* as the point in which Matthew's story reaches its 'culmination' and the *cross and resurrection* as the point of 'resolution' (1992:355, cf Powell 1992b: 197). It is probably also fair to criticise Powell for failing to link the cross and resurrection together in the way that Jesus himself does in 16:21; 17:22-23 and 20:17-19. Nevertheless Powell is in my opinion correct to see the cross as the point of resolution and the resurrection and Great Commission as the point of culmination, ie, the end of the story albeit an end which serves as a new beginning.

²⁸ This re-formulation enables Powell to maintain Kingsbury's very correct emphasis on the story line of Jesus as the primary story line (Kingsbury 1988:43-94). Kingsbury's emphasis on the story of Jesus as the primary story-line within Matthew, while rather obvious at one level, is consistent with his own Christological evaluation of Matthew's redaction (Kingsbury 1975). It is a refreshing by-product of narrative critical studies of Matthew given that some historical-critical interpretations have tended to focus too exclusively on the Matthean community or the evangelist's theology. Of course as we noted elsewhere the temptation for the narrative critic can be to lose this *Christocentricity* and to focus mainly on the evangelist's authorial activity.

between *Jesus and the disciples*, while important and related to this primary conflict, are nevertheless secondary and contribute at the level of sub-plot rather than main plot. Whether Powell's conclusions are valid or not is the question to which we now turn as we look more closely at the question of conflict within Matthew's gospel.

3. Conflict in Matthew's Story of Jesus.

In our discussion thus far we have focussed attention on *what* the primary conflict within Matthew's story of Jesus is and *where* that primary conflict is *resolved*. As we turn our attention now to a more detailed study of conflict in Matthew's gospel we begin by asking *where* the conflict in Matthew's gospel actually *begins*.

There is in fact a hint of potential conflict in 1:18-25 which is often overlooked by commentators. In this *pericope* the narrator informs the reader of something of which Joseph, Mary's husband to be, is unaware. Mary is pregnant, the reader is told, ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου. The discovery of this state of affairs poses a dilemma for 'righteous Joseph.' He does not want to expose Mary to public disgrace yet at the same time marrying her is out of the question. His decision is thus to divorce her 'quietly' (λάθρᾳ). What is often overlooked though is that such a divorce, quiet or otherwise, would totally undermine the Davidic Messiahship of Jesus for in Matthew Jesus traces his status as 'son of David' from Joseph alone (1:16, 20) (cf Kingsbury 1988:47). Nor is it reasonable to expect that Mary could simply inform Joseph of the true situation. Indeed, although the narrative assumes such knowledge on the part of Mary, Matthew unlike Luke does not record the angel's visit to her or her humble response to the angel's message. It is left then to the 'angel of the Lord' to inform Joseph of the truth about Mary's pregnancy (1:20). The potential conflict between 'righteous Joseph'²⁹ and the as yet unborn 'king of the Jews' is thus averted. In addition, the narrator has introduced the 'Divine point of view' into the narrative, for there is no doubt that the angel of the Lord is to be seen as a messenger of God himself. The reader is thus left in no doubt that, according to Matthew, it is God's purpose for the child, though 'conceived by the

²⁹ Unlike John (John 7:1-5) and Mark (Mark 3:20-21), Matthew does not record any actual conflict between Jesus and his family. Although he records the request by Jesus' mother and brothers 'to speak to him' (Matthew 12:46-47 cf Mark 3:31-32) he, like Luke (Luke 8:19-20), omits the Marcan phrase ἔλεγον γὰρ ὅτι ἐξέστη.

Holy Spirit' to be born 'a descendant of David according to the flesh.'³⁰

The second incidence of conflict in the narrative is actual, rather than potential and is at first sinister and then deadly in nature. But it is also deeply ironic. It concerns Jesus, the recently born king of the Jews on the one hand, and Herod the King together with *πᾶσα Ἱεροσόλυμα* on the other. It is thus, in a very real sense, a *conflict of kingdoms*. On one side we have Jesus, the one born 'king of the Jews' who will soon emerge proclaiming the 'nearness' of the 'kingdom of heaven.' At this stage he is helpless and needing protection. Yet he is clearly the one chosen by God as both the genealogy and the angelic intervention make clear. On the other hand we have Herod, able to summon the leading priests and teachers and to order the killing of the children. Yet he is desperately insecure, is himself clearly not the promised Christ as his question to the religious leaders makes clear (2:4) and is in the end unable to thwart God's plan for Jesus. There is a deep irony in the phrase 'where he stayed until the death of Herod' (2:15 *cf* 2:19). Despite Herod's schemes, Jesus survives while Herod himself perishes.

Initially the reaction of both Herod and Jerusalem³¹ is one of disquiet (*ἐταράχθη*). This disquiet on the part of 'all Jerusalem' and Herod stands in marked contrast to the exuberant joy (*ἐχάρησαν χαρὰν μεγάλην*) of the Magi when they eventually find the child. But as the narrative unfolds this disquiet on the part of the king is manifest first as sinister plotting (2:7-8) and then as murderous rage (2:16-18). The religious leaders (*τοὺς ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ γραμματεῖς τοῦ λαοῦ*) are perhaps at this early stage no more than unwitting accomplices in Herod's murderous schemes, though they were no doubt aware of Herod's violent character and his fear of rivals.³² Both Herod's rage and evil scheme and the apathy of the religious leaders stand in strong and tragic contrast to the conduct of the Magi. For the gentile Magi come from afar seeking *ὁ τεχθεὶς βασιλεὺς τῶν*

³⁰ As the apostolic sermons in Acts make clear, this statement of Paul's (Romans 1:3) regarding the Davidic descent of Jesus is foundational to the apostolic preaching to Jews.

³¹ Luz (1989:135-36) points out that the association of 'all Jerusalem' with Herod is surprising in historical terms, but not if one bears in mind that in Matthew Jerusalem as a 'setting' is associated with hostility to Jesus. See further Kingsbury (1988:29); Hagner (1993:28); Davies & Allison (1988:237-39).

³² For a less charitable view of the religious leaders at this stage in the narrative see Kingsbury (1988:5; 1992:349). Certainly their association with 'the people' (*τοῦ λαοῦ*) paves the way for the later manipulation of the crowd to secure Jesus' death (*cf* Matthew 27:20). See also the detailed discussion of the relationship between the leaders & the crowds in Davies & Allison (1988:224-243) and the comments of Luz (1995:27).

Ἰουδαίων in order to worship him (ἤλθομεν προσκυνῆσαι αὐτῷ). The religious leaders, though they know the scriptures (2:5-6), make no attempt to seek this king at all. Herod's search, on the other hand, is for reasons very far removed from worship. This failure on the part of the Jews where the gentiles succeed is as we shall see a characteristic theme in Matthew's gospel.

One final observation regarding this section is what may be called the 'geographic aspect' of the conflict. Jesus having been born in Bethlehem as 'king of the Jews' is forced by Herod's murderous intention to flee to Egypt, the traditional locus of the oppression of Israel (2:13). This flight intended to save Jesus' life has, as we shall see further below, strong links with the story of Israel's journey to Egypt to escape the famine. But whereas Israel come up out of Egypt and eventually enter the Promised Land, Joseph although told by the angel of the Lord to go εἰς γῆν Ἰσραήλ, is then warned a second time (2:22) and withdraws (ἀνεχώρησεν)³³ to Galilee. This shifts the focus of the story away from Jerusalem of the Jews and onto Galilee of the Gentiles, thus opening the way for Matthew's application of Isaiah 9:1-2 (8:23-24 MT) to Jesus' ministry (cf Matt 4:12-17 and Luz 1995:26-30). While not excluding Jews from the ambit of Jesus' ministry, this geographical relocation once again underlines both the sense of hostility to Jesus associated with Jerusalem and Judea within Matthew's gospel and the *inclusiveness* of Jesus' ministry to those normally thought to be *outsiders* by the orthodoxy of the day.

These initial indications of conflict may seem to suggest that the primary conflict in Matthew is indeed that between Jesus and Israel as Kingsbury has suggested. But Powell (1992b:199) is surely correct to point out that, despite these early references to conflict, 'the narrative portrays Jesus as engaging in conflict with Satan that is *direct* and *confrontational* before it describes his first encounter with either the disciples or the religious leaders [*italics mine*]'.³⁴ This confrontation is described in 4:1-11. And although Matthew, unlike Luke (cf Luke 4:13) does not say so explicitly, it is clear from the rest of the gospel that the wilderness temptation is just

³³ The verb ἀναχωρέω is characteristically Matthean (2:12,14,22; 4:12; 12:15; 14:13; 15:21; 27:5). It usually takes the form ἀναχωρέω + εἰς + locale (Davies & Allison 1988:252 note 67). In all but one occasion (27:5), the construction is used in relation to a conflict situation and as a response to that conflict.

³⁴ The earlier conflicts while not unimportant to Matthew's plot (see below), serve thus rather to establish the *characterization* of the religious leaders, the crowds and the formal authorities (represented here by Herod - later by Pilate).

the beginning of Jesus' conflict with Satan. We read in 4:1 that 'Jesus was led (ἀνέχθη) into the wilderness by the Spirit (ὑπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος) to be tempted (πειρασθῆναι) by the devil' (ὑπὸ τοῦ διαβόλου). The phrases ὑπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος and ὑπὸ τοῦ διαβόλου stand in stark contrast to one another. Elsewhere in Matthew (6:13), Jesus teaches his disciples to pray that they will not be led into temptation but delivered from the evil one (καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν, ἀλλὰ ῥύσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ),³⁵ a prayer which seems to contradict his own experience, at least as far as being led into temptation / testing³⁶ is concerned. Matthew 4:1 thus alerts the ideal reader to the possibility that the wilderness temptation of Jesus is unique. This possibility is further strengthened by noting three aspects of Jesus' designation as the 'Son of God'.

First, we note with Powell that 'Satan challenges Jesus specifically as the Son of God'³⁷ and tempts Jesus to worship him rather than God.' This suggests to the reader that 'the conflict between Jesus and Satan is derivative of a more basic opposition, namely that between God and Satan. It is as God's representative and supreme agent that Jesus comes into conflict with Satan' (Powell 1992b:199). This perspective is further substantiated if we note that from the very beginning of the narrative, God has been actively involved, both through the Holy Spirit and through angelic messengers and in fulfilment of the prophetic word. Thus Matthew not only 'establishes ...God's point of view as normative for his story' (Powell 1990:48), but by linking the divine plan for Jesus (1:21) and the divine presence in Jesus (1:23) right at the outset of the narrative, he also links God's work and Jesus' ministry in the closest possible terms.

Second, although as we shall argue below, the designation of Jesus as 'Son of God' is within Matthew's temptation narrative primarily a reference to Jesus as the *ideal Israelite* and *Israel's King*, it does evoke the 'inter-textual memory' of the confrontation between the tempter and the

³⁵ The word πονηροῦ can be either masculine or neuter singular genitive and thus be translated either as 'evil' i.e. the evil thing or the evil one. In my opinion the latter option is to be preferred. (So e.g. NIV, RV, NASB, NEB).

³⁶ The word πειρασμόν can refer to either temptation (i.e. temptation to sin) or testing in general. Whereas God is often said to put His people to the test, He is never described as tempting people to sin (cf. James 1:12-15). The context determines the precise rendering to be adopted.

³⁷ That this title is important for our understanding of the Temptation Narrative can be seen from the recurrent use of the phrase 'if you are the Son of God' in 4:3 & 4:6.

original ideal pair who were God's representative rulers over the earth (*cf* Genesis 1:26).³⁸ The setting is of course very different - then a garden Paradise, now a barren wilderness - but the basic issue is the same: Will God's word or the word of the tempter be believed and obeyed? If we bear in mind that while Matthew's story focuses on the primary character Jesus from his birth (1:18) to his final post-resurrection encounter with the disciples, its temporal boundaries in fact span from creation (19:4) to consummation (28:20), then such a recollection of the archetypal confrontation between the tempter and God's representative ruler seems not to be out of place. Furthermore, as we argued in relation to Matthew's genealogy, the mention of Abraham in 1:1 and the closing emphasis on the 'nations' strongly suggest that God's original purpose of *blessing* and *rest* for humankind (Genesis 2:2-3; 12:1-3 *cf* e.g. Matthew 5:3-10; 11:28) are not very far from the implied author's mind as he tells the story of a descendant of Abraham who will bring blessing to those who will pledge allegiance to him.

Third, Jesus designation as Son of God implies that Jesus is the *ideal Israelite*. Although the title has been applied to Jesus by scholars with reference to 1:18-25,³⁹ it is used for the first time by Matthew in 2:15. The angel's instruction to take 'the child' (τὸ παιδίον) to Egypt to save his life is seen as a fulfilment of Hosea 11:1. In its original context, this verse is not a *prediction* but a *historical recollection* of Israel's *exodus* out of Egypt. At first reading this makes Matthew's application of the verse to Jesus as *fulfilment* seem inappropriate.⁴⁰ But this is not the case if we note the broader parallels implicit in the two stories. According to Genesis 45:7 & 50:20, Israel's presence in Egypt was God's action for Israel's good, in particular the preservation of 'many lives.' In like manner, Jesus sojourn with his parents in Egypt is to save his life from Herod's murderous schemes.⁴¹ The result of this sojourn in Egypt is that at the appointed time, Jesus, like

³⁸ In Luke's gospel the link between Adam the Son of God and Jesus the Son of God is 'fore-grounded' by the juxtaposition of the genealogy which goes back to Adam the son of God and the temptation narrative (Luk 3:23-4:12). The quotations from Deuteronomy do show that Jesus as the true Israelite is not excluded from Luke's picture. The latter are not present in Mark who alone mentions the 'wild animals' (1:13), perhaps as reminiscent of Paradise Lost (1:13).

³⁹ See e.g. Luz (1995:30-37), Kingsbury (1988:49-57).

⁴⁰ The question of Matthew's use of the Old Testament will be discussed elsewhere in the dissertation.

⁴¹ We are dealing here with a Jesus / Israel parallel, explicit in 2:15 and implied in the wilderness temptation. Israel's designation as Son of God (a royal title) is of course entirely appropriate given their status among the nations as a 'royal priesthood' (Exodus 19:6). The title is later applied to the king as 'ideal Israelite.'

Israel, is called up out of Egypt by God. In this sense then Jesus recapitulates Israel's exodus⁴² and calls the Hosea quotation to mind. That exodus imagery is involved can also be seen by noting that Jesus' responses to the devil's temptations are all from the book of Deuteronomy and recall the period of Israel's post-exodus wilderness wanderings. During this period it was God himself, not the devil, who put Israel to the test (Deuteronomy 8:1-3) but this fact only accentuates the contrast between Israel's lack of faith and Jesus complete trust in God. Jesus the *ideal Israelite* succeeds where historical Israel failed.

Third, Jesus' designation as 'Son of God' portrays Jesus as Israel's *Spirit-anointed King*. In 3:13-17 we read of Jesus' baptism by John. In the parallel passage in Mark 1:9-11 no mention is made of John's objection (cf Matthew 3:14-15) and one may at first reading see Jesus' baptism merely as an act of identification with the people. But Matthew's account stresses the distinctiveness of Jesus' baptism. While Jesus acknowledges John's dilemma ("Αφες ἄρτι- 3:15), he nevertheless views his baptism by John as 'fitting'(πρέπον) and as a 'fulfilment of all righteousness' both for himself and for John (ἡμῖν πληρῶσαι πᾶσαν δικαιοσύνην).⁴³ This is the first occurrence of the word δικαιοσύνη in Matthew's Gospel.⁴⁴ Its use in connection with John's baptism of Jesus (see 3:15 & 21:22) is noted by Matthew alone and, in my opinion, should be understood in two inter-related ways.

(1) First, there is the general point that whatever other connotations δικαιοσύνη may have in Matthew⁴⁵, it at the very least should be understood in an ethical and moral sense. This fact is underscored both in 3:1-15 and 21:28-31 by the references to 'repentance' (Μετανοῶ) as the

⁴² The image of 'another exodus' which underlies Matthew's temptation narrative is one which within Old Testament prophetic eschatology is used to describe the end of the exile. We will return to this again later.

⁴³ This statement has generated a large amount of discussion and disagreement among commentators- see e.g Davies & Allison (1988:325-27); Hagner (1993:56); Luz (1989:173-179); Morris (1992:64-65); Ridderbos (1987:58-59) and the bibliographies quoted in these works.

⁴⁴ δικαιοσύνη occurs 7 times in Matthew's Gospel, predominantly in the Sermon on the Mount. Cf Matthew 3:15; 5:6, 10, 20; 6:1, 33 and 21:32.

⁴⁵ Note the discussion in Hagner (1993:56) who disputes Przybylski's conclusion (1980) that righteousness in Matthew always involves 'God's demand on human beings'.

appropriate response to John's message and preparation for the coming of the kingdom he is announcing (3:2). And the reason for this is not hard to find, for the 'kingdom of the heavens' of which John is a herald is characterised by the righteousness of the heavenly Father whose kingdom it is (6:33) and which ought in increasing measure to characterise those who are its citizens (5:6,10,20 & possibly 5:48). Thus for John to come ἐν ὁδῷ δικαιοσύνης is simply to state that John has come in the service of and to prepare the way for God's righteous kingdom. By his coming to John for baptism, Jesus, although himself righteous and not in need of repentance (note again the phrase Ἀφες ἄρτι - 3:15), enters into the 'way of righteousness' and thus fulfils righteousness, i.e., does the right thing.

(2) Second, however, it is clear that John's message and baptism was a preparation for the coming of Jesus. In 3:11 John, clarifying his baptism, points forward to the 'one who follows' (ὁπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος) whose person and whose baptism are far superior to that of John. It is for this reason that Jesus answers the challenge to his authority by the chief priests and the elders by appealing to the heavenly origin of the 'baptism of John' (21:25). In 11:13-14 we read that 'all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John' (ἕως Ἰωάννου) and that ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν ἡμερῶν Ἰωάννου τοῦ βαπτιστοῦ ἕως ἄρτι ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν βιάζεται....' As we noted in our discussion of Salvation History, the pivotal point of these two periods is the arrival of Jesus. What all of this means is that with the coming of Jesus, the time of preparation has given way to the time of fulfilment (πληρῶσαι-3:15) and the time has come for the inauguration of God's righteous rule. But how will this righteous rule of God be established? Matthew has already answered that question by recording the angelic testimony to the fact that Jesus 'will save his people from their sins' (1:21). To that testimony is added that of the 'voice from heaven' in 3:17.⁴⁶ Jesus is named by God as His 'beloved Son' (ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός)⁴⁷ (cf Psalm 2:7-9). But he is also identified as God's Servant, for it seems likely that the phrase ἐν ᾧ εὐδόκησα is a

⁴⁶ It is likely that Matthew, like Luke, is dependent on Mark for the primary form of this statement. Matthew alone has modified the second person form of the quotation to third person. The effect of this is to present the heavenly testimony as more impersonal and objective, thus enabling the reader to view the testimony as directed to the onlooker as well as to Jesus himself.

⁴⁷ Although the word Θεοῦ does not occur in 3:17, it is clear that the 'voice from heaven' is God's voice and that the μου is thus to have God as its antecedent.

reference to the MT of Isaiah 42:1.⁴⁸ What is striking is that in the latter verse, God's servant is described as having been given God's Spirit (נְתַתִּי רוּחִי) and as the one who, consequently, will bring justice (מִשְׁפָּט) to the nations. This description of the Servant, is highly compatible to that of the Son in Psalm 2, who is God's Anointed One and who, although ruler and judge of the nations, will bring blessing to all who take refuge in him.

In my opinion then, Jesus' baptism by John, rather than merely a part of his own *preparation* for his royal mission, marks its *formal beginning*.⁴⁹ Jesus is set apart by John the prophet and anointed with the Holy Spirit to be the Servant King to fulfil all righteousness not only by being righteous himself, but by establishing righteousness on the earth. The only way this will happen is if Jesus the Servant King submits himself to the will of his Father, even at the cost of his own life. This is precisely what Jesus does in the face of Satan's temptation to turn from the will of God (4:10) and this is what he continues to do even to the point of giving his life as a 'ransom for many' (20:28). It is thus ultimately as the Servant King that Jesus goes in the power of the Spirit⁵⁰ to confront and overcome the devil and to begin his work of saving God's people from their sins. The following *pericope* makes it clear that Jesus' preliminary victory over Satan clears the way for the public proclamation of the presence of the 'kingdom of the heavens' in the person and work of Jesus, God's anointed king (4:12-17).⁵¹

⁴⁸ As in the case of Hosea 11:1, so Isaiah 42:1 in context also has reference to the promised end of the exile, this time for the southern kingdom of Judah.

⁴⁹ This notion of a formal beginning to the ministry of Jesus is what has caused some scholars (notably Krentz and Kingsbury) to see the phrase Ἀπὸ τότε ἤρξατο as a formal structural marker in Matthew. While it is unlikely that this is the case, the phrase is an explicit and thus important indicator of narrative flow which serves 'to inform the reader of major new developments in the overall flow of the story' (Powell 1992b:193).

⁵⁰ Although Matthew does not draw an explicit analogy with David, it is hard not to see some link here between Jesus the Anointed King and David. It was soon after his anointing by Samuel that David, empowered by the Spirit (1 Sam 16:13), confronted and overcame Goliath. While there are obvious differences it is clear that the basic Old Testament notion of the Israel's Anointed one fulfilling God's saving purposes for His people is very much in view in Jesus' victory over Satan. See also Matthew 12:22-28 especially the question in vs 23.

⁵¹ The close connection between 4:1-11 and 4:12-17 can be seen by noting that the phrase Ἀκούσας δὲ in vs 12 presupposes the nominal Ἰησοῦς as its antecedent. Although the phrase Ἀπὸ τότε in 4:17 could be taken to refer in the narrow sense to John's imprisonment and Jesus removal to Capernaum, it seems more likely that it does indeed refer to a significant new phase in the overall flow of the story (Powell 1992b: 193), a new phase precipitated by Jesus' victory. The imprisonment of John and the move to Capernaum thus do not initiate, but rather facilitate this new development.

It is in particular in relation to the establishment of God's righteous kingdom (see further below), that the temptation narrative is not merely preliminary but also programmatic. This can be seen by noting Matthew's description of the successive encounters between Jesus and the Satanic realm.⁵² First, as in the wilderness, Jesus emerges victorious from his subsequent encounters with demonic forces. This conquest by Jesus over the forces of evil is misunderstood (from the context it would seem deliberately) by Israel's religious leaders (Matthew 12:24), but there is no doubt how Jesus understood it and consequently how the ideal reader of Matthew's story is to understand it. As in the wilderness, Jesus victory over evil spirits is ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ (Matthew 12:28). Having 'bound the strong man' (by implication Satan - 12:29), Jesus is able to 'rob his house', that is, deliver people from the control of evil spirits. Second, since Jesus victory over the demons is 'by the Spirit' it is a sure sign that with the coming of Jesus, the kingdom of God has come upon them (ἄρα ἔφθασεν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ - 12:28). This point of view, while clearly not that of the Pharisees, is entirely consistent with that presented earlier, first by the narrator (cf 4:12-17) and then by the evil spirits themselves.⁵³ The corollary of the truth that Jesus is indeed God's Spirit empowered agent to overthrow Satan and establish the kingdom of God is that to speak against Jesus' ministry as the Pharisees did, is in fact to blaspheme the Holy Spirit. And this is an unforgivable sin for if, as Matthew has already made clear, Jesus is God's agent to 'save his people from their sins' (1:21; cf 9:6), then to reject Jesus' ministry is to reject all possibility of receiving that forgiveness. It is at this point in Matthew's gospel that the conflict

⁵² See e.g. Matthew 4:23-25; 8:16-17, 28-34; 9:32-10:1; 16:21-23; 17:18. Two observations are noteworthy. First, after the initial encounter - Jesus does not again directly face Satan but only his representatives. Second, the exorcisms disappear from Matthew's gospel after Peter's confession at Caesarea, with the one exception of the boy in 17:8. And this exorcism is atypical for it centres upon the disciples inability to deal with the demon, an inability which is remarkable in the light of their mission described in 10:1. This absence of exorcisms after 16:20 is worth further consideration but this is beyond the scope of the present project. In my opinion the answer lies in the fact that from 16:21 onwards we enter a new phase in Jesus' self disclosure in which the emphasis is not on his royal authority but on his rejection and suffering (hence the well known and much discussed Ἀπὸ τότε ἤρξατο of 16:21). This change for Jesus has a resultant change for the ministry of the disciples, not least in relation to the demonic realm (cf 17:19-20).

⁵³ We are told in 8:28-29 that far from recognizing in Jesus a fellow cohort of Satan, they identify him as υἱὲ τοῦ θεοῦ and recognize not only that there is no commonality between themselves and Jesus (Τί ἡμῖν καὶ σοί) but that he is in fact the one who will be responsible for their ultimate downfall. The phrase ἡλθες ὥδε πρὸ καιροῦ βασανίσαι ἡμᾶς is noteworthy in that it implies that it will be from Jesus, the Son of God that the demons will receive their punishment 'at the appointed time.' In the overall temporal scheme within the gospel, this appointed time is to be identified with that 'day of judgement' (ἡμέρα κρίσεως) mentioned e.g. in 10:15; 11:24. Elsewhere Jesus refers to this time as 'the harvest' which will occur at the end of the age (13:30, 40-41).

between Jesus and Satan has its clearest intersection with his conflict with the religious leaders - and that again, in a deeply ironic way. This conflict, although hinted at in 2:4-6 ⁵⁴ and again in the encounter between John and the Pharisees and Sadducees (3:7-10), does not involve Jesus directly until 5:20. In this statement concerning the necessity for a righteousness 'exceeding that of the Pharisees and teachers of the law' and the following comparison (5:21-7:29) Jesus consciously identifies himself, in contradistinction to the Pharisees and teachers of the law, as the authoritative teacher and guide of those who seek to enter the kingdom of heaven.⁵⁵ But it is in 9:1-17 that we see the first actual interaction between Jesus and the religious leaders. This encounter takes the form of a growing conflict and this, not surprisingly, in connection with the very heart of Jesus' mission *viz* his forgiveness and calling of sinners. No reaction is mentioned to Jesus' rejoinders to their growing criticism, but shortly afterward, as far as story time is concerned, we find them dismissing Jesus' conquest over evil spirits as the work of Satan himself (Ἐν τῷ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων ἐκβάλλει τὰ δαιμόνια). Here then we encounter an irony similar to that in 12:24. By opposing Jesus in his dealings with sinners, the teachers of the law and Pharisees are in fact opposing not just Jesus but God himself, whose cause they claim to represent (9:3). For the ideal reader knows that God's purpose for His Son is that he should save his people from their sins. Thus inadvertently, the Pharisees and teachers of the law have taken the exact position which Satan did by seeking to stand between Jesus and the fulfilment of that mission. It is they, and not Jesus, who are in fact in league with the 'prince of demons.' This same irony can be noted in Jesus' words in 12:43-45. By juxtaposing Jesus' statements to the Pharisees with his teaching about the evil spirit returning to the 'house swept clean' (12:38-45), Matthew implies that it is not Jesus, but his opponents who are under the control of the 'prince of the demons'. It is for this reason that Jesus applies the word 'wicked' (πονηρὰ) to that generation of whom the Pharisees and teachers of the law are representative (12:38-39).

But there is a second ironical intersection between the conflict of Jesus with Satan and that of

⁵⁴ The answer given to Herod by the chief priests and teachers of the law although 'orthodox' and indeed in the narrator's service to establish Jesus' credentials as the Christ, nevertheless stand in marked contrast with the refusal of the Magi to return to Herod with information. It is thus purely on the information of the religious leaders that Herod gives the order for the murder of the children in the vicinity of Bethlehem.

⁵⁵ It takes little imagination on the part of the reader not to see in the recurring phrase οἱ ὑποκριταί a reference to the Pharisees and teachers of the law mentioned in 5:20. *cf* Matthew 23:1-29.

Jesus with the religious leaders and this has to do with the eventual determination of the religious leaders to kill Jesus (12:14). Set against the backdrop of the first component of Jesus' mission viz that of preaching the good news of the kingdom and calling sinners to repentance (4:17 and 9:13) the religious leaders are as we have seen the clear opponents of God's plan for Jesus. But set against the second component, viz that such a mission will ultimately only be achieved by the death of Jesus the Servant King as a ransom for many (16:21 and 20:28), they, by plotting Jesus' death and ultimately bringing it about with Pilate's help, become the unconscious helpers in God's purpose for His Son and thus contribute to the overthrow of Satan's scheme to keep Jesus off the cross (16:23-see below). This 'help', as in the case of Judas, does not exonerate them, but merely underlines God's sovereign control over the affairs of Jesus' life (26:23-24).

The conflict between Jesus and Satan also intersects with the conflict between Jesus and his disciples. That such a conflict indeed existed may seem strange to the casual reader of the gospels, but it soon comes to the fore under more careful scrutiny. Mark Powell has correctly noted that 'the role that the disciples play in Matthew's narrative is precisely the opposite of that played by the religious leaders: they assist in the accomplishment of the first part of God's plan, but then hinder the accomplishment of the second' (1992b:202). By 'first part' Powell is referring to Jesus' ministry of proclamation by which he calls sinners to repentance (4:17; 9:13). By being sent out by Jesus to preach the message of the kingdom (10:6-7), these disciples act not only as servants of Jesus but as servants of the 'Lord of the harvest' who are going into His harvest field (9:37-38). As in the gospel of Mark, this sending out of the Twelve comes as a little bit of a surprise, given the disciples' apparent lack of insight into Jesus identity.⁵⁶ But unlike Mark, Matthew does not stress the disciples' lack of understanding of Jesus' preaching priority and generally presents them in a favourable light in the early part of the gospel narrative.⁵⁷ This serves to present the disciples as helpers - albeit imperfect ones - to Jesus' ministry of proclamation. But Matthew is entirely consistent with Mark in presenting what amounts not only to lack of understanding but definite opposition on the part of the disciples when it comes to the second

⁵⁶ See e.g. Matthew 8:23-27.

⁵⁷ The order of events in Mark 1:29-45 is slightly changed in Matthew's account. But the significant thing to note is that Matthew omits both the rebuke from the disciples in Mark 1:37 and the consequent hindrance to Jesus' avowed determination to preach in the 'other' towns that resulted from the leper's talk.

part of God's purpose for Jesus, viz his death on the cross. In each of Jesus' three passion predictions recorded by Matthew,⁵⁸ the pattern is the same. *Prediction* is followed by *misunderstanding* and *instruction* about discipleship. But in the first prediction a fourth element is present, viz *strong rebuke*. The reason for this is that whereas in the other two, Jesus is confronted only with misunderstanding, in the first he encounters open opposition from Peter who just earlier has acted as a spokesman for the disciples. While Jesus recognizes the *human* dimension to Peter's comments (16:23), he is also quick to notice the *diabolical* element. By opposing Jesus words about the cross, Peter, like Satan, opposes God's primary purpose for Jesus, a purpose made clear not only by Jesus' prediction of the passion, but by God's own testimony in the immediately following account of the transfiguration (17:5). For the second time in the gospel, a divine voice⁵⁹ declares Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν ᾧ εὐδόκησα (cf 3:17). But this time the voice adds the phrase ἀκούετε αὐτοῦ. In its immediate context, this is not just a command to listen to Jesus in general, but to listen and, by implication, to submit to his words about his impending death. The reader is thus left in no doubt that it is God's will for Jesus to '....go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders, chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day' (16:21 - NASB).⁶⁰ By speaking against rather than listening to these words of Jesus, Peter thus directly opposes God's plan for His Son.

Two further conflicts need to be discussed briefly before we leave the theme of conflict in Matthew's story of Jesus. These are *Jesus' conflict with the crowd* and *Jesus' conflict with himself*. In dealing with the former, we note that the crowd can be treated as a single literary character, in distinction from the disciples on the one hand, and the religious leaders on the

⁵⁸ 16:21-28 (cf Mark 8:31-38); 17:22-18:4 (cf Mark 9:31-35); 20:17-28 (cf Mark 10:32-45). Powell (1992b:194) identifies these three passion predictions as explicit as opposed to others which he describes as allusions.

⁵⁹ Given the details of the account, the voice is clearly supernatural. That the voice is also divine, can be seen not only from the reference to Jesus as ὁ υἱός μου (cf 3:17) but also from the description of the voice as coming ἐκ τῆς νεφέλης. This reference to the cloud together with the presence of Moses and Elijah (both of whom had theophanic experiences on God's Holy mountain) suggests that the cloud is indicative of the presence of God Himself in the cloud and that the voice from the cloud is thus God's voice.

⁶⁰ Note also the word δεῖ which serves to convey this idea of divine necessity.

other.⁶¹ Despite the fact that the crowd is at times a backdrop to Jesus' interaction with the two primary characters, it nevertheless plays a significant role in the story, not least in relation to Jesus' mission. Our first meeting with the crowd in Matthew is positive for the people stream to be baptised by John and are eager followers of Jesus. They thus form the 'congregation' to whom Jesus preaches and from among whom he calls 'sinners' (9:8,13 *cf* 7:24-29). In this way in they function as 'helpers' rather than 'opponents' to the first aspect of Jesus' God given ministry, *viz* the preaching the kingdom. But by the passion narrative a very different picture has emerged. Like the religious leaders, the crowd who joins in with the cry for Jesus' death are the 'unconscious helpers' in God's purpose to ransom sinners through the death of Jesus. But their mocking of Jesus on the cross, shows that they are in fact deeply opposed to God's way of saving His people. They refuse to recognize Jesus as King on the cross⁶² and their promise to believe *if* Jesus comes off the cross, aligns them with Satan's own temptation that Jesus should be King in a way other than submission to God's will (*cf* 4:1-11, 16:22-23).

As far as Jesus' conflict with himself is concerned, we note that although every conflict which Jesus faced involved at least some measure of self-confrontation, it is primarily in Gethsemane on the night of his arrest that the reader of Matthew's gospel is granted insight into Jesus' personal struggle concerning the cross. The reader is permitted to join 'Peter and the two sons of Zebedee' (26:37) in Gethsemane with Jesus. These three are invited as 'helpers' to 'watch' with Jesus (γρηγορεῖτε μετ' ἐμοῦ) while he goes to pray at this moment of extreme distress (vs 38). But, since the disciples are overcome by sleep, only the reader is granted audience by the narrator to Jesus' earnest prayer. Two things emerge. *First*, the reader is left in no doubt about the extremity of Jesus' emotional turmoil and the sincerity of his request that God should find 'another way' for His plan to be fulfilled (Πάτερ μου, εἰ δυνατόν ἐστιν, παρελθάτω ἅπ' ἐμοῦ τὸ ποτήριον τοῦτο).⁶³ *Second*, the reader is left in no doubt that as in other conflict situations, Jesus

⁶¹ On the notion of a collective as a single literary character see Powell (1990:51). For a more detailed discussion of the crowd as 'character' in Matthew see Kingsbury (1988:24-25).

⁶² This refusal stands rather ironically in stark contrast to the 'formal charge' which was placed above Jesus head (27:37) and the centurion's testimony that this truly 'was the Son of God' (27:54).

⁶³ The term ποτήριον may be a reference to the 'cup of God's wrath' as e.g in Isaiah 51:17-23. If this is the case, then Jesus can be said to have drained the cup of God's wrath on behalf of his people and thus to bring their exile to an end (*cf* Isaiah 51:1-16). However the earlier usage of ποτήριον in Matthew 20:22 suggests that Jesus has 'suffering' and 'death' in mind when he uses the term. It is unlikely that the disciples will have been

is determined to do the will of his Father, no matter what the cost to himself. The two recorded prayers end with the express request that God's will be done and the narrator tells us in 26:44 that when Jesus prayed the third time⁶⁴, he said 'the same thing' (λόγον εἰπὼν πάλιν). Jesus thus rises from his prayer with renewed determination to face not only his betrayer (26:46) but the 'sinners' (ἁμαρτωλῶν) into whose hands he is to be betrayed. This designation of his enemies is particularly poignant if one remembers that Jesus goes willingly to the cross precisely to 'save his people from their sins' (1:21). By refusing to 'save himself' Jesus is thus 'able to save others', a fact which is tragically obscured from the very people Jesus came to save (27:41-44).

In the light of the above discussion, we conclude our discussion of conflict in Matthew's story of Jesus in agreement with Powell's thesis that despite the importance of the various conflicts described within Matthew's gospel, the primary conflict is between *God at work in Jesus* on the one hand and *Satan* on the other. It is on this conflict, that the main plot of Matthew's story of Jesus turns.

4. The Plot of Matthew's Gospel: A Preliminary Conclusion

The above discussion of *conflict* in Matthew's gospel together with our earlier comments regarding *narrative flow* and *causality* enable us to draw some preliminary conclusions regarding the main plot and sub-plots of Matthew's story of Jesus. According to Powell (1992b:199-203) Matthew's narrative, 'can best be understood as embodying one main plot and at least two sub-plots. The main plot is that which provides the narrative with its most intentional logic and deepest meaning. Subplots, on the other hand, involve subsidiary developments that are related to the main theme but also possess a certain integrity of their own.' Powell describes this main plot as '*God's Plan and Satan's Challenge*.' The sub-plots are respectively '*Jesus and the religious leaders*' and '*Jesus and the disciples*.' By 'God's Plan' Powell means 'the divine plan by which God's people will be saved from their sins.' With this view of Matthew's plot I would

expected to drink the cup of God's wrath in the way that Jesus would in his capacity as λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν.

⁶⁴ It is interesting to note that the three-fold prayer of submission to the Father's will in Gethsemane in 26:36-46 mirrors Jesus' three-fold submission to the Father's will in his resistance to the devil's temptation in the wilderness in 4:1-11. Comparison with Mark shows that this triadic structure is due to source material rather than the invention of the evangelist himself.

substantially concur. Matthew's gospel can be described as 'the story of God's activity to save sinners from their sins through the preaching and primarily through the death of His Son and Servant Jesus. Although this purpose of God is both opposed and assisted at different levels by various characters within the narrative, notably the religious leaders and the disciples, it primarily achieved in victory over Satan, whose aim it is to prevent Jesus from doing his Father's will, first by attempting to disqualify Jesus (4:1-11), then by attempting to divert him from the cross. By his death, Jesus saves his people by giving his life as a ransom for many (20:28). It is this fact which qualifies him to 'forgive sins on earth' (9:6) and to 'call sinners' (9:13). The resurrection of Jesus and the Great Commission flow from this 'saving death' first as *vindication* and then as *new effect* serving to expand the offer of such salvation beyond 'the lost sheep of Israel' (10:6) to 'all nations' (28:19).

But this description of Matthew's plot raises other questions. *What are the sins from which God will save his people? Who are these people? And what does this salvation mean?* It is at this point, in my opinion, that Powell's description of Matthew's plot itself requires 'more precise formulation' to use his own phrase. This we will attempt by considering the plot of Matthew's gospel in relation to the theme of exile and restoration.

5. The Plot of Matthew's gospel and the End of the Exile

It is in connection with the three key questions raised above that N T Wright takes the work of Powell one step further. Wright states that 'the very sentence which is found to be thematic for the main plot - the prediction that Jesus will 'save his people from their sins' - presupposes a previous story as well. It assumes that the plot of the gospel comes toward the end of a larger and longer plot, in which "his people" fall victim to "their sins"' (Wright 1992:385). According to Wright it does 'not take much imagination, much reading in Matthew, or much knowledge of the Jewish background to see what that story is. It is the story of Israel, more specifically the story of the exile.' Two inter-related and fundamental claims lie at the root of Wright's statement. The first of these *viz* that 'most Jews of the second-temple period regarded themselves as still in exile, still suffering the results of Israel's age-old sin' (Wright 1992:386) is of great importance and will

be discussed more fully elsewhere.⁶⁵ Its importance for Wright's own thesis is in relation to its role as *implicit* story or *meta-narrative*, that is, its function as a story-line which both Jesus and his hearers knew quite well and which in Matthew's explicit story of Jesus (and in Jesus' own claims) is both built upon and subverted (*cf* Wright 1996:199). The second claim, *viz* that a careful reading of Matthew itself shows that 'the plot of the gospel' does indeed mesh with the 'the story of Israel, more specifically the story of the exile' must now be considered more carefully. This we will do by looking in greater detail at the three 'explicit statements of purpose' (*viz* 1:21, 9:13 and 20:28) which according to Powell 'cannot be ignored in any consideration of the gospel's plot that does justice to the principle of causality' (1992b:195).⁶⁶

5.1. 'Salvation from Sins' and the End of the Exile

'He will save his people from their sins...'

Wright's claim that the plot of Matthew's gospel does indeed mesh with the story of the exile seems to be substantiated when we turn our attention to the first of the so-called 'explicit statements of purpose' *viz* the angel's declaration that the child was to be called Jesus because 'he will save his people from their sins' (1:21). Although this statement does not by itself provide the reader with a specific explanation of ἁμαρτιῶν, τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ, or what 'salvation from sin' actually involves, the preceding genealogy⁶⁷ suggests that 'his people' are God's chosen people Israel, that 'sins' are the *national sins* that resulted in the loss of the glory of the Davidic rule and the subsequent exile of the nation, and that the 'salvation from sin' that Jesus will achieve is

⁶⁵ Wright's view's on Second Temple Judaism and its belief to 'still be in exile' (theologically and spiritually) has quite understandably provoked intense discussion and debate. See e.g. Evans (1999, 77-100) and the bibliography listed there. See further Chapter 6 below.

⁶⁶ The aorist of ἔρχομαι is used several times in Matthew's gospel to describe Jesus' mission (5:17; 9:13; 10:34-35; 11:19 (?) and 20:28 -see Davies & Allison, 1988:483). In 9:13 he is described as the one who did 'not come to call the righteous but sinners' and in 20:28 as the Son of Man who 'did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many (λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν). These twin statements of mission are inter-related; it is because Jesus gives his life as a ransom that he can call sinners and yet at the same time maintain righteousness. This fact, totally misunderstood by the religious leaders, is underlined by Jesus definition of himself as the Son of Man (King) who has authority on earth to forgive sins (9:6). It is also entirely consistent with the name given to him by angelic visitation before his birth (1:21). At the cross Jesus thus fulfils the mission for which he has come and achieves salvation from sin for the people of God.

⁶⁷ See our discussion in Chapter 2 *Genealogy*.

indeed the rescue of Israel from her plight by dealing decisively with her sins. In Wright's words: 'The genealogy...tells the story that must be grasped if the plot of the whole gospel is to be understoodits careful structure and particular emphases say... to Matthew's careful reader that the long story of Abraham's people will come to fulfilment...with a new David, who will rescue his people from their exile, that is, "save his people from their sins"'(1992:385-86).⁶⁸

But there is a second noteworthy fact concerning this statement that Jesus will save his people from their sins and that is its juxtaposition with the narrator's observation that the child Jesus, conceived by the Holy Spirit,⁶⁹ embodies the *very presence of God Himself* (1:22-23). This juxtaposition extends beyond the rather obvious fact that in 1:21 and 1:23 we are dealing with two implications of the fact that the child has been conceived by the Holy Spirit. It also suggests that the two names and their respective 'interpretations' should be compared with each other.⁷⁰ When such a comparison is made the results are rather striking, especially when we take account of the original context of the passage from Isaiah 7 which is cited in Matthew's characteristic formula quotation.

In its original setting within the book of Isaiah, the Immanuel logion functions as a 'sign' (σημεῖον) both for Ahaz and the nation of Judah whom he represents. At first glance, the sign appears to be positive, though the preceding rebuke against Ahaz (Isaiah 7:13) points in a different direction. Three things are said about the child to be born to the young woman (LXX ἡ παρθένος, MT לְעַלְמָא). First, he will be named Immanuel; second, he will eat curds and honey; third, before he reaches the age of discernment, the land belonging to Judah's enemies will be laid waste. These three statements seem at this preliminary stage to be positive in tenor. The name Immanuel implies that God will be present with his people, the very thing that marked

⁶⁸ The phrase 'that is' in Wright's statement here underlines that for Wright *salvation from sin* is synonymous with *rescue from exile*.

⁶⁹ The importance of this Spirit-empowered conception is stressed by the fact that it is presented not only by the narrator himself (1:18) but also by 'an angel of the Lord' (1:20) whose interpretation of the events the reader is clearly to take as normative.

⁷⁰ The fact that the 'angelic interpreter' of 1:21 and the narrator, whose interpretation we have in 1:23 have already been shown to share the same basic point of view with respect to Jesus' conception (cf 1:18 & 1:20) implies that the two names 'Jesus' and 'Immanuel' should be compared as two aspects of the truth about Jesus and his mission, rather than contrasted as two conflicting viewpoints.

Israel out as God's chosen people during the Exodus years (Exodus 15:13-18; 29:46). Curds and Honey conjures up the idea of a 'land flowing with milk and honey', viz the Promised Land. Likewise, the promise of the destruction of Judah's enemies suggests the old Exodus *motif* of God who fights on behalf of his people (Exodus 15:1-12). Taken thus, these statements may well promise Ahaz a time of blessing akin to that of the legendary Solomon, in whose time the goal of the Exodus was finally fulfilled (cf 1 Kings 1-10 esp 8:1-21). Such optimism proves however to be short-lived. For Isaiah continues with the statement that because of his refusal to take the LORD at his word, the days of Ahaz will be like those of Rehoboam rather than Solomon (7:17). In 'that day' (7:18,20,23) God will be present with his people, but in the worst way possible viz in the form of the king of Assyria and his armies (7:17-25, cf the repetition of the Immanuel *motif* in Isaiah 8:8, 10). Here then is a great and terrible reversal. The goal of Israel's redemption and the glory of Israel's nationhood was the presence of God. God with us was intended to be a sign of privilege and hope! But with privilege comes responsibility - responsibility to trust God and therefore to obey his word. Ahaz's refusal to take God at his word, for all his apparent piety, was thus an act of rebellion borne out of a lack of trust. In a word it was *sin* (see Isaiah 1:18, 28; 3:9), and, against this sin, God would act with decisive and terrible judgement, a judgement so severe that the prophet describes it as 'distress and darkness and fearful gloom' (8:22), terms which within later prophetic eschatology would be used to describe the Babylonian exile of Judah.⁷¹ The symbol of hope (God with us) would become a sign of judgement - God would be with His people as judge, and before His terrible wrath they would all but be destroyed (see Isaiah 8:9-15). Of this impending judgement, the child, born to the prophetess⁷² and named Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, would be an ever present reminder from the 'LORD Almighty who dwells on Mount Zion' (Isaiah 8:18).

But it is also clear within Isaiah 7:1-9:7 (LXX, MT 9:6) that judgement is not God's final word. This at the very least was the significance of Isaiah's first son *Shear-Jashub*.⁷³ Although

⁷¹ See e.g. Isaiah 5:30; 8:22; 49:9; 59:9; Jeremiah 13:16; 23:12; Ezekiel 34:12. cf Psalm 44:19; 107:10-16.

⁷² Careful comparison of the wording of Isaiah 7:14 and 8:1-4 makes it clear that the child born to the prophetess and named Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz is, at least at the first level of interpretation, the child mentioned in 7:14.

⁷³ Shear-Jashub means 'a remnant shall return / remain.' Cf e.g. Isaiah 1:9; 6:11-13.

‘distress and darkness and fearful gloom’ will cover the land and the people, the darkness will in the end give way again to light (LXX 9:1-2; MT 8:23-9:1).⁷⁴ Just as the darkness spilled down over Judah from the north, so too the light. ‘Galilee of the Gentiles’ will be honoured; the ‘people walking in darkness’ will see a great light; joy and victory celebration will once again characterise the nation. And the reason? Once again a child will be born and a son given, a child whose significance can be seen from the string of names he possesses. On one hand, he will clearly be *Solomon revivodus*, the ‘Wonderful Counsellor’ and ‘Prince of Peace’ in whom the reign of the house of David will be established. On the other, he will be called ‘Mighty God’ and ‘Everlasting Father’, the one in whom the *presence* and *rule* of God himself will be established.⁷⁵ What began therefore in terms of the threat of unmitigated disaster (*God with us as judge*) will by God’s grace end in the promise of all-embracing salvation (*God present as Saviour King*). God himself will act to save his people from the consequences of their rebellion and in doing so will bring blessing to all the nations of the earth (*cf* Isaiah 2:1-5).

Set against this background Matthew’s juxtaposition of the titular *Immanuel* with the personal name *Jesus* comes as an enormous relief to any reader familiar with the Isaianic background. But it also comes as something of a surprise, particularly in the light of the immediately following narrative recounting the reaction of Herod and all Jerusalem to the news of ‘one born king of the Jews’.⁷⁶ and the unfolding saga of the conflict between Jesus and the Israel of his own day (see above).⁷⁷ Such a reaction may well suggest that *Immanuel* in Jesus’ day ought once again to signify unmitigated judgement, but the opposite is in fact the case. Although it is true that rejection of Jesus’ words and works will lead to judgement, it is also true that for all who ‘repent’

⁷⁴ Here again Isaiah uses an image which in later prophetic oracles is synonymous with the end of the exile. See e.g. Isaiah 9:2; 42:16; 58:8; 60:1.

⁷⁵ The description of the child in Isaiah 9 is reminiscent of the ancient promise to David in 2 Samuel 7:11-16.

⁷⁶ In Matthew 2:1-23 the ideal reader is confronted with a king and a people who are deeply shaken by momentous news (ἀκούσας δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἡρώδης ἐταράχθη καὶ πᾶσα Ἱεροσόλυμα μετ’ αὐτοῦ) in much the same way as Ahaz and the people were shaken (MT 22:1, 22:2; LXX ἐξέστη, σαλευθῆ). Although, unlike Matthew’s adoption of the LXX ἡ παρθένος, no exact verbal equivalence between Matthew and the LXX is found at this point, the ideas are complementary and suggest comparison to the reader familiar with Isaiah.

⁷⁷ Indeed as the narrative unfolds the reader encounters terminology which draws striking comparisons between Israel in Jesus’ day and the exile generation (see e.g. Matthew 13:10-15 *cf* Isaiah 6:9-10; Matthew 15:8-9 *cf* Isaiah 29:13).

and ‘confess their sins’ the presence and rule of God in the person and work of Jesus will mean that at last the age of judgement and darkness is over and that the light is beginning to dawn. It is precisely this point of view that Matthew reinforces for the reader in the next encounter with the term ἁμαρτίας, viz the account of John the Baptist and the extraordinary result of his preaching in the Judean desert.

‘Repent for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand...’

Unlike Mark and Luke, Matthew does not state explicitly that John came κηρύσσων βάπτισμα μετανοίας εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν.⁷⁸ But that does not mean that the question of sin or the related issue of repentance are of no importance to his preaching. Indeed, as is the case with Jesus himself, they are germane for our understanding of his ministry. This can be seen by noting two points:

First, we are told that a key component of John’s preaching was in fact the demand for repentance in anticipation of the coming kingdom of the heavens (3:2,8,11). That the ‘coming of the kingdom’ should demand *repentance* of John’s Jewish hearers, rather than some other response such as celebration, is in itself a striking thing, though our familiarity with the statement has rather blunted our sensitivity at this point. Certainly such a call is entirely consistent with the *righteous character* of the kingdom which we noted above. But Wright (1996:246-258) is surely also correct to observe that this call to repentance which is characteristic of the preaching both of Jesus (4:17) and of John (3:2), while necessarily involving individuals,⁷⁹ transcends ‘the regular *ad hoc* repentance of individual sinners when they recognized their sin and underwent

⁷⁸ See Mark 1:4 & Luke 3:3. Matthew alone underlines the continuity between the preaching of John and that of Jesus by summarising the preaching of John in the words, later repeated by Jesus at the beginning of his own ministry: Μετανοεῖτε· ἤγγικεν γὰρ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν (3:2 cf 4:17).

⁷⁹ It is in my opinion unlikely that each individual Israelite ‘confessed’ in the sense of admitting a detailed list of personal wrongs. In that sense each individual confession would have been an acknowledgement by the individual of identity with ‘corporate sinfulness’ - of sharing in and contributing to the sinfulness of the nation as a whole (cf Isaiah 6:5). But it is precisely this element of each Israelite’s responsibility which means that the individual cannot be dismissed with regard to sin or salvation from sin.

the normal Jewish practices for restitution' (:257). Rather, it is a call for an *eschatological*⁸⁰ and thus *national* repentance i e a call to a repentance by the nation which is consistent with and appropriate to the dramatic reversal of the national fortunes which a phrase like ἡγγικεν γὰρ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν would suggest to a first century Jewish audience.⁸¹ This corporate and national emphasis is further strengthened by the use of the plural forms Μετανοεῖτε (3:2, cf 4:17) and ἐξομολογούμενοι τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν (3:6), by the description of the comprehensive effect of John's preaching (3:5) and by the Elijah-like depiction of John in 3:4.⁸²

Second, as we noted in the introductory chapter, Matthew, while adding his own variation,⁸³ follows Mark's cue and explains John's ministry in terms of the great restoration prophecy found in Isaiah 40. According to Matthew, what John was doing was to be understood precisely in terms of the fulfilment of the ancient promise in Isaiah 40:1-2 that God would deal with the sins of Jerusalem and Judah and bring her hard labour (i e her exile cf Isaiah 39:5-7) to an end. This

⁸⁰ This *eschatological* and *national* dimension is further emphasised by the very stark language of 3:7-11. Terms like τῆς μελλούσης ὀργῆς, and the image of the 'axe laid to the roots' are certainly strongly eschatological in tone. At the same time John's disclaimer upon the Pharisees and the reference to 'God raising up children for Abraham from the stones' (vs 9) must have been shocking to his hearers if not to Matthew's later readers. [Note: It is unnecessary - indeed gratuitous - to read this saying as an invention of Matthew in the light of later Christian / Jewish conflict and hostilities. The concept of an eschatological prophet preaching in the wilderness and disclaiming existing Jewish structures was by no means unique to John or Matthew however uncomfortable it might have been for such authorities.]

⁸¹ See further the detailed discussion in Wright (1992:280-307; 1996:198-243) and the critical interaction with other publications which forms part of that discussion.

⁸² cf 2 Kings 1:8. While the majority of commentators draw the connection between John and the 'Elijah' of Malachi 4:5, none of the works consulted make the connection between John's call to repentance and the remarkable national repentance brought about through the ministry of Elijah and described in 1 Kings 18. Verse 37 of 1 Kings 18 is particularly significant here for it speaks of a 'turning back' (Heb תָּסֻבָּה) of the hearts of the people to Yahweh. This turning back, while it should be perceived as Yahweh's gracious doing, is nevertheless through the instrumentality of his prophet - vs 36. Indeed, further reflection may well suggest that the use of Elijah in Malachi 4:5 and other Jewish eschatological writing is precisely because of the incident at Carmel which at the time must have threatened the very existence of the nation of Israel as a nation religiously distinct from its neighbours. (Note the painstaking rebuilding of the altar and the references to Israel's covenantal distinctiveness in vss 30-31.)

⁸³ Mark's more brief Καθὼς γέγραπται ἐν τῷ Ῥσαῖα τῷ προφῆτῃ is followed by a longer composite quotation connecting Malachi 3:1 & Isaiah 40:3. This has the effect of uniting the promise of the end of Judah's exile which is in view in Isaiah 40 with the 'post-exilic' promise of Malachi. This certainly supports Wright's assertion that the gospel writers are proclaiming the end of Israel's exile in the ministry of Jesus. Matthew's distinctive formula quotation retains only the Isaiah 40 logion, using the Malachi quote in the context of Jesus' public defence of John's ministry. Matthew 11:10 cf Luke 7:27. The nett effect in terms of linking Isaiah and Malachi in relation the ministry of the Baptist and thus of Jesus is however the same.

message of ‘comfort’ (Isaiah 40:1) as opposed to ‘woe’ (e.g. Isaiah 6:5; 10:1-4; 28:1-33:24) takes the form of ‘gospel proclamation’ (Isaiah 40:9 LXX εὐαγγελιζόμενος; MT מְבַשֵּׂרֵת) and is expressed in terms of a *new exodus* in which Yahweh the Sovereign LORD comes to rescue his people from exile and to lead them back to the land so that once again they may be His people and He may be their God (Isaiah 40:1-44:28 cf Exodus 15). Although Matthew does not invoke the term ‘gospel’ at this point in his story, but like Mark reserves it for the proclamation of Jesus,⁸⁴ there is no doubt that he sees the preaching of John and that of Jesus as intimately connected. True, there is a clear distinction between the Baptist and Jesus. John comes to prepare (3:3) for the coming of God’s righteous kingdom, Jesus comes to inaugurate it (4:14-17). John comes with an act of symbolic washing, Jesus comes to usher in a new age of the activity of God’s Spirit, not only in Jesus himself but in all who will heed his message (3:11-12).⁸⁵ But there is also a clear connection.⁸⁶ This means that Jesus’ own proclamation of the ‘kingdom of the heavens’ and his call for repentance and faith must be seen in terms of the great restoration prophecy of Isaiah 40 as well. In the proclamation of Jesus and the deeds that accompany that proclamation (cf Matthew 4:23-25; 9:35-38), Israel’s God is acting both to rescue and shepherd his scattered and shepherd-less flock (Isaiah 40:11 cf Ezekiel 34:11-16; Matthew 9:36). This is just another way of saying that in the proclamation and actions of Jesus, Israel’s God is *becoming King* in ways very much like those associated in the Hebrew scriptures with the end of Israel’s exile. This biblical theological perspective on the part of the evangelist is further underlined by his use of Isaiah 9:1-2 to end the first major section of his narrative. As we noted earlier, within the prophetic writings of the Hebrew scriptures, especially those most closely associated with Judah’s exile in Babylon, ‘darkness’ and ‘light’ were symbols of Yahweh’s judgement upon his rebellious people and his gracious rescue following their repentance. By

⁸⁴ Matthew 4:23; 9:35 cf Mark 1:14-15.

⁸⁵ Although Matthew does not refer directly to Ezekiel 36 at this point, it is hard not to see an allusion to this passage within the words of the Baptist. Perhaps the fact that at this point Matthew follows Mark accounts for the lack of a characteristic formula quotation. In terms of our overall thesis it is instructive to note that once again the setting of Ezekiel 36 is the promise of the end of Israel’s exile.

⁸⁶ See 3:2; 4:17; 11:7-19. Although it is no doubt correct to argue with Kingsbury *et al* that 4:17 makes a significant transitional point within the narrative structure of Matthew, the overlapping of key themes such as that concerning Jesus’ gospel proclamation of the kingdom (4:17; 4:23; 9:35) warns against a too rigid division between various sections of the gospel.

linking the beginning of Jesus' public proclamation⁸⁷ to the shining of 'light into darkness'⁸⁸ Matthew is again presenting Jesus as the one who brings the prophetic hopes to fulfilment and brings the time of exile for the people of God to an end. This, at a preliminary level at least, is what it means for Jesus to 'save his people from their sins'.

One final question concerns the identity of τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ in 1:21. Who are the people that Jesus came to save? In the light of the above arguments that salvation from sins means *end of exile*, one may be tempted to side with those commentators who see 'his people' exclusively in terms of national Israel.⁸⁹ And such a view does seem to concur both with certain features of the genealogy such as the reference to τὸν Ἰουδαῖον καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς αὐτοῦ, as well as the identification in 2:1-6 of Jesus as the one who has been born βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων, and who will shepherd God's people Israel, especially if we note the link between τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ in 1:21 and τὸν λαόν μου τὸν Ἰσραήλ in 2:6. But, as others have noted,⁹⁰ both the genealogy and the so-called birth narrative have other features as well. For, as we noted in our discussion of the genealogy, both the mention of Abraham in 1:1 and the inclusion of the women imply a purpose for Jesus which stretches beyond the national boundaries of Israel. And the same is true in 2:1-12 where we read of the Gentile Magi who seek the child and honour him and who thus seem to epitomise the reality that in Abraham and his seed all the nations of the earth will indeed be blessed (Genesis 12:1-3; cf Matthew 8:11). How do we resolve this anomaly?

A possible answer lies in recognizing the close link that exists in Matthew's story between the salvation of Israel and the salvation of the nations, a link that can be seen by noting the *inclusio*

⁸⁷ The use of the name Jesus in 4:17 recalls the angels words in 1:21, and thus links the preaching of Jesus to his mission of saving his people from their sins. This explains why Matthew gives substantial discourse time to the proclamation of Jesus as well as to his passion. See further Carter (1996:20).

⁸⁸ Although the phrase Ἀπὸ τότε ἤρξατο can be viewed as the beginning of a new section of the narrative, it is within so-called *story time* clearly linked to the occasion of Jesus hearing of John's imprisonment (4:12). Although the temporal participle ἀκούσας is directly linked to the main verb ἀνεχώρησεν, both of these provide the temporal frame of reference against which Ἀπὸ τότε ἤρξατο is to be understood.

⁸⁹ See e.g. Luz (1989:121); Wright (1992:385-86; 1996).

⁹⁰ See e.g. Davies & Allison (1988:210); Hagner (1993:19-20).

formed by 1:23 and 28:20.⁹¹ In the first of these, as we noted above, the evangelist describes Jesus as the fulfilment of Isaiah 7:14 and the embodiment of both the *rule* and *presence* of God, the one through whom Israel's exile is finally brought to an end. In the second the reader is confronted with the words of Jesus promising *his own presence* with the disciples ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος and that in the context of *his own universal authority and rule* (πᾶσα ἐξουσία ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς).⁹² Although the evangelist as narrator gives no specific link between this promise and the Hebrew scriptures, and although the *pericope* is devoid of Son of Man nomenclature, Jesus' words in 28:20 do suggest a link with Daniel 7:13-14, especially if one bears in mind the Jesus' frequent references to himself as Son of Man elsewhere in the gospel (see below). Either way, the implications are clear. Jesus, Israel's divinely appointed king and saviour has now been given (Ἐδόθη) authority ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος over all the nations (20:19 *cf* Daniel 7:13) - and this with a view to their incorporation into the people of God over whom Jesus rules as king (20:19-20). In other words, by bringing Israel's exile to an end Jesus opens the door for the salvation of the world.⁹³ Salvation while for Jews *first* (Matthew 10:5-6) is for the Gentile *also* in ever age and in every place !

5.2. Forgiveness of Sins and the End of the Exile

Beginning his discussion of the question of 'The Forgiveness of Sins,' Wright (1996:268)

⁹¹ See e.g. Lohr (1961:403-435) who comments in 1961 that while *inclusio* has been recognized at the level of individual passages, its use in interconnecting materials has not been observed (:410). In the latter regard he has 1:23 & 28:20 particularly in mind. See further Van Unnik (1959:287); Luz (1989:121-22); France (1989:311-12); Kingsbury (1988:40-42). Kupp (1996) and Van Aarde (1982) like Frankemölle (1974) make Matthew's 'with us' language a primary focus of theological reflection.

⁹² The link between Jesus' *rule* (28:18) and his *presence* (28:20) is very important. It is because Jesus has been given a world-wide dominion that the disciples as his emissaries have the authority to disciple the nations; it is because of his ongoing presence that they can expect some success in their endeavours (*cf* 10:42, 16:16-19 and especially 18:18-20 where the rule and presence theme are again repeated).

⁹³ The notion that the restoration of Israel would lead directly to the salvation of the nations is one encountered in a number of Old Testament texts. One particularly striking occurrence is Isaiah 2:1-5. The vision is closely related to that which has gone before (as the phrase 'concerning Judah and Jerusalem that Isaiah son of Amoz (1:1 *cf* 2:1) makes clear). But in 2:1 the vision is given eschatological connotations. In the 'last days' (LXX ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις) Jerusalem and the temple will be established i.e. restored following the righteous but devastating judgement recorded in chapter 1. God's righteous and beneficent rule will be established over the whole earth (2:4) and the nations will willingly acknowledge it (2:3). This can be seen by their desire 'to learn God's ways and walk in his paths.' It is precisely this vision which Jesus places before the disciples with command to disciple and teach the nations all that he has commanded.

makes the following introductory statement.

Centuries of Christian usage have accustomed readers of the New Testament to think of 'forgiveness' as primarily a gift to the individual person, which can be made at any time. It is, in that sense, abstract and ahistorical, however much it may burst upon one's consciousness with fresh delight in particular historical situations. On this basis, analyses of Jesus' offer of forgiveness have tended to focus on the piety (the sense of forgiveness) or the abstract theology (the fact of forgiveness, or the belief in it) of Jesus' hearers and/or the early church. The entire argument of this book indicates that this puts the cart before the horse. What is regularly missing from analyses of forgiveness is that which, arguably, stands front and centre in precisely those biblical and post-biblical Jewish texts upon which Jesus and the early church drew most heavily. *Forgiveness of sins is another way of saying 'return from exile' [italics original]*.

A careful consideration of this statement once again reveals the three fundamental convictions of Wright's thesis which we noted in the previous section. First, as was the case with 'salvation from sin' the term 'forgiveness of sins' should be seen in *corporate* and *national* terms rather than in a purely 'individualistic sense.'⁹⁴ Second, 'forgiveness of sins' therefore means 'end of exile.' The implication of this is that according to Wright, 'forgiveness of sins' and 'salvation from sin' are synonymous terms. Third, this point of view with respect to the meaning of forgiveness is by and large reflected within the biblical and post-biblical writings of the Second Temple period. This latter point is as we noted earlier the topic of discussion elsewhere in the dissertation, though one is impressed by the evidence adduced by Wright at this point (Wright 1996:268-74). Points one and two must now be considered in greater detail as we turn our attention, to the second of Matthew's so-called 'statements of purpose' viz Matthew 9:13. Given the close connection between this saying and what precedes it (see below), we begin with the account in 9:1-8 of what, in my opinion, should be titled not the *healing* (e.g NIV, NASB, UBS) but the *forgiveness of the paralytic*.

⁹⁴ It is important to note that Wright is not denying the reality of 'personal forgiveness' but rather affirming that when repentance is called for or forgiveness proffered in the context of Jesus' ministry as presented in the gospels something far more significant than personal forgiveness and repentance was at stake. See Wright (1996:246-58).

‘Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven’

In reading Matthew 9:1-8, one is immediately struck by a number of things. First, Jesus’ words (vs 2) appear at first glance to be *totally irrelevant* to the paralytic’s need. There is no indication in the story that the faith of the men who brought the paralytic to Jesus involved anything other than confidence that he could indeed heal the man. So Jesus’ response must have come to them as as much of a surprise as it does to the reader. Nor does Jesus’ response ἀφίενταί σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι imply that the paralytic’s physical condition is the direct consequence of his *particular* sins. Rather, as Hagner (1993:232) correctly notes, the link between the paralytic’s sickness and his sin should be related to the ‘fundamental premise...[that] in the biblical view (Gen 3) all sickness and suffering, like death itself, trace back to the entry of sin into the world. In this sense all sickness is caused by sin.’ This means that Jesus’ response to the paralytic, far from being irrelevant, serves to highlight that the problem of sin is *the* most fundamental problem facing humanity and that it is primarily this problem that Jesus came to resolve. This point of view is entirely consistent with that reflected in all three of the purpose statements viz 1:21; 9:13 and 20:28. Seen in this light the focus should therefore be placed on the significance of the healing, rather than on the cause of the sickness. This is precisely what happens in Matthew 9:6.

This leads us to the second striking fact and that is the *extraordinary claim* which is made in 9:6 for the authority (ἐξουσίαν) of Jesus. This claim is implicit in the pronouncement by Jesus in 9:2 - Θάρσει, τέκνον, ἀφίενταί σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι and as such it invokes immediate hostility on the part of the teachers of the law. The accusation of ‘blasphemy’ (9:3) and the present tense ἀφίενταί make it clear that Jesus is not merely claiming the right to declare that ‘God had forgiven the man’s sins and that this was now being announced (something that was performed regularly by priests)’ (Hagner 1993:232) but to *actually forgive* the man’s sins then and there! The reaction of the teachers of the law, prompts Jesus to substantiate his words. This he does first by referring to himself as the Son of Man,⁹⁵ and then by healing the paralytic as visible proof that as the Son

⁹⁵ A great deal has been written about the term *Son of Man*, its possible origin, titular role (or otherwise) and use by Jesus or *about* Jesus, as some would prefer to contend. A full survey of the material and debate of the issues is however beyond the scope of the present project. What can be noted at this stage is the observation by Davies & Allison (1991:43) (cf Stanton 1989:228) that ‘Scholars have tended to agree that it is

of Man he has *authority on earth* (ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς) to ‘forgive sins’ (ἀφιέναι ἁμαρτίας). The phrase ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς is important. It indicates that what within the Jewish mind was an essentially *eschatological* reality (the rule of the Son of Man) was already being anticipated in the words and actions of Jesus. This fact makes the healing of the paralytic an entirely appropriate *sign* of Jesus’ authority, for it prefigures the kind of restoration which was associated with the establishment of God’s kingdom and the consequent authority of his Anointed One. Ultimately however Jesus’ claim as with so much else in Matthew’s story of Jesus is resolved with reference to the death of Jesus. For it there as we shall see, that Jesus gives his life as a ‘ransom for many’ (20:28) and secures the forgiveness which he here confers.

Third, and closely related, one is struck by the *personal* (σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι) form of address that Jesus uses in speaking to the paralytic. It is debatable whether the term τέκνον (son) which mirrors the θυγάτηρ (daughter) of 9:22 should also be seen as intimate and technical *viz* ‘son’ or ‘daughter’ of Israel.⁹⁶ But whatever one’s conclusion in this regard, Wright’s general point is well made. In the forgiving of the paralytic, something of far greater import than the forgiveness of a particular Israelite individual is at stake, real though this may have been. Jesus is not announcing some new kind of religion (personal forgiveness of sins as opposed to ‘self help moralism’)⁹⁷ but rather one key aspect - indeed *the* key aspect of the *nearness* the ‘kingdom of

pedagogically profitable to divide the synoptic Son of man sayings into three categories: 1. Those which concern the earthly activity of the Son of man. 2. Those which concern the sufferings of the Son of man. 3. Those which concern the future coming of the Son of man in glory....’ See *inter alia* Bruce (1982, 50-70); Cullmann (1963:137-192); Hare (1990); Lindars (1983); Luz (1995, 112-116); France (1989:288-92); Kingsbury (1988:95-103, cf 1984:3-36); Hill (1980:2-16; 1984:37-52); Meier (1979:210-219); Davies & Allison (1991:43-52); Hagner (1993:213-15). Whatever one’s conclusion about the term *Son of Man* in 8:20, its use in 9:6 together with the word ἐξουσία, as well as the fact that the crowd describe this authority as ‘God given’ (τὸν θεὸν τὸν δόντα-9:8) cannot but suggest connections with Daniel 7:13 to the reader (Davies & Allison 1991:77; Hagner 1993:234).

⁹⁶ It is tempting to supply the personal pronoun ‘my’ with the terms ‘son’ and ‘daughter’, but there are no good grounds for doing so. Neither Matthew nor Mark use the article in either case. Nor is it clear that Matthew’s use of τέκνον necessarily implies intimacy for he is at this point simply following his source Mark. Luke, by comparison, excludes the account of the healing of the woman, and records Jesus’ form of address to the paralytic as the more neutral phrase ἄνθρωπε. It is hard to argue that this change in wording was due to the Gentile readership which Luke has in view, for Mark who has a similar audience in view uses τέκνον. Perhaps it is best to simply take the terms as synonymous and indicative of the style of the respective evangelists.

⁹⁷ See Wright (1996:272). Although this point has been debated at length with regard to the so-called *new perspective* on Paul, it is of course of relevance to gospel studies as well. See further Charlesworth (1992:833-35).

heaven' in the words and works of Jesus.⁹⁸ This key aspect is forgiveness of sins as the path to restoration and inclusion - what Wright calls the '*eschatological forgiveness of sins*' (1996:272).

The story of the forgiveness of the paralytic by Jesus serves therefore to cast further light upon the mission of Jesus and consequently upon what is meant by describing Jesus as the one who will save his people from their sins. Because Jesus has come to save his people from their sins, he has been given authority by God to forgive sins - ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, that is, here and now. This forgiveness is, however, not an end in itself, but a means to an end. That end is the full restoration of the sinner prefigured in the healing of the paralytic. If we describe this restoration as salvation, then we can say that according to Matthew, Jesus has come to save his people from their sins by forgiving their sins. To use Wright's terminology while differing from his view, *forgiveness of sins* is not a synonym for *restoration from exile* but the means by which such restoration is brought about.

'....not the righteous but sinners'

The forgiveness and subsequent healing of the paralytic is, as we have already noted, not a privatised experience for all its personal dimensions but rather a participation by an individual Israelite in the kingdom of God present in the person and work of Jesus - a sharing in the salvation which Jesus has come to bring about. Thus it comes as no surprise that this story is followed closely by two additional stories which tell of others who through an encounter with Jesus experience 'salvation' as well. What does, at least at first glance, come as something of a surprise is the *kind* of people who are saved. Indeed, it is on this aspect that 9:9-13 places its focus.⁹⁹

In the first story (9:9), Jesus calls a man called Matthew in terms very like those used with the

⁹⁸ The story of the forgiveness of the paralytic forms part of the collection of words and works of Jesus which are bracketed by the *inclusio* in 4:23 and 9:35. The key phrase in this *inclusio* is the phrase τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας (cf Isaiah 40:9-11; 61:1-3). See also 11:1-6 where Jesus cites 'the lame walk' as evidence that he is indeed the Christ.

⁹⁹ That this is indeed the case can be seen by noting three things viz the repetition of the terms τῶν τελωνῶν καὶ ἁμαρτωλῶν, the question of the Pharisees (9:11) and the two-fold answer of Jesus once again focussing on 'kinds' of people - the sick, the healthy, the righteous, sinners.

first disciples (4:19). Matthew is summoned to ‘follow’ (Ἀκολουθεῖ) Jesus and, as with the fishermen in 4:19-20 does so immediately, turning his back on his livelihood (cf 8:18-22). But here the similarity ends for the reader is informed that this Matthew was in fact a *tax-collector*! The exclamation mark is entirely appropriate here and expresses in literary form what the first disciples may well have felt and the Pharisees later openly expressed regarding the suitability of such a choice by Jesus. In my opinion Wright is correct in stating that, even when a more nuanced view is taken, tax-collectors were in effect viewed as the moral equivalent of lepers - a class apart and to be kept apart (1996:266-67). Thus Jesus’ choice of Matthew comes as something of a shock - but not when one sees it against the backdrop of 9:1-8 and the description of Jesus as the saviour of sinners. The connection between 9:9 and 9:1-8 is clear from the use of the construction: *conjunction plus present participle* (Καὶ παράγων) but goes beyond it. It is because Jesus has authority on earth to forgive sins, that he can call a tax-collector like Matthew to become a follower¹⁰⁰ and, in the story which follows, to eat with him in his home together with other tax-collectors and ‘sinners’.

It is this act of table-fellowship and thus *inclusion* that provokes the Pharisees’ hostile question in 9:11: Διὰ τί μετὰ τῶν τελωνῶν καὶ ἁμαρτωλῶν ἐσθίει ὁ διδάσκαλος ὑμῶν; Here again, Wright proves insightful, for he points out that ‘there is no reason to suppose that the Pharisees...spied out ordinary people who were ‘associating’ with ‘sinners’ and angrily objected to them doing so. Accusations were levelled, rather, because this welcome to sinners was being offered *precisely by someone announcing the kingdom of god*, and moreover, offering this welcome as itself a vital part of that kingdom’ (1996:274). Put another way, the Pharisees reacted strongly to Jesus’ practice because by that practice he was subverting their *understanding* of the coming of the kingdom of God and the salvation which that coming would inaugurate. That this is the case can be seen from Jesus’ rejoinder to them, particularly the statement πορευθέντες δὲ μάθετε τί ἐστὶν in 9:13. What the Pharisees must go and learn, is the lesson of Hosea 6:6 that God ‘desires mercy not sacrifice.’ This quotation is repeated in 12:7 where it is used to exonerate

¹⁰⁰ It is reasonable to assume that the command Ἀκολουθεῖ μοι implied more than just a physical following and included the demands which would normally have been associated with discipleship, quite apart from all that Jesus himself commanded them (cf 28:20). However the link between 9:9 and 9:1-8 make it clear that at the heart of this new relationship between Matthew and Jesus lay Jesus’ authority to forgive Matthew’s sins.

the conduct of the disciples and to point to the fact that the Pharisees have failed to penetrate beyond the letter of the law to its spirit and intention. Its function in 9:13 is the same except that here it is used to exonerate Jesus' own action of eating with those whom the Pharisees consider to be beyond the boundaries of the kingdom. By objecting to Jesus' welcome of sinners they in fact fail to live up to God's own practice, for throughout his prophecy Hosea makes it plain that God longs for his people to return to him so that he may welcome them back, even though their own love is but skin deep. What makes matters worse is that the Pharisees act in this way in the name of 'righteousness', for it is in my opinion *they* whom Jesus has in mind when he says that he has not come to call the righteous but sinners. The point is fairly subtle and must be considered carefully.

First, we need to note from 5:20 that Jesus does not view the Pharisees along with the teachers of the law as devoid of righteousness. They have *a* righteousness, but it is not the kind of righteousness¹⁰¹ that Jesus enjoins upon his followers. What constitutes this kind of Pharisaic righteousness that must be 'surpassed' (περισσεύσῃ ...πλεον) is clear from 5:21-7:12. It is a righteousness which tends to be public rather than private, to impress people rather than to please God, and to be concerned with externals rather than the heart (*cf* 15:8-9), the letter of the law rather than its spirit.¹⁰² In a word it tended to be *hypocritical*, exactly the kind of righteousness that characterised Israel in Hosea's day (Davies & Allison 1991:105). Now a fundamental characteristic of this kind of 'righteousness' is its *exclusive* nature, and it is this which Jesus undermines by his actions and words. But he does more ! For we need *secondly* to note that while the words of Hosea 6:6 seek to expose the hypocrisy of Israel's dealings with the LORD, they are still to be understood in the context of God's desire to show mercy to Israel - even *hypocritical* Israel (Hosea 6:11b). It is not God's lack of mercy, but Israel's lack of repentance that will in the end lead to the devastation of exile (Hosea 3:4; 7:11-16). But even exile need not be God's final word if only Israel will repent (Hosea 6:1-3). This means that although the phrase 'I have

¹⁰¹ See Hagner (1993:109) *contra* Luz (1989:269-70) See further Davies & Allison (1988:499-500).

¹⁰² I am conscious of the fact that at this point the views concerning the Judaism(s) of Jesus day as discussed e.g by Sanders, Moore and Wright come into play. I am not suggesting therefore that Judaism was a legalistic religion in its essence. But one cannot remedy one misconception by creating another. For the clear testimony of Matthew's gospel at least is that the chief objection that Jesus' levelled against the Pharisees and teachers of the Law was that of hypocrisy, of obsession with minutiae while neglecting the weightier matters of the Law. See e.g 15:1-12, 23:1-39.

not come to call the righteous' serves as a rejection for those who on the basis of their concept of righteousness sit in judgement upon Jesus' words and actions, it has within it the offer of acceptance and welcome, even to these if they will only acknowledge their need (cf 5:3-4) and the fact that they too are the sinners whom Jesus came to call (9:13 cf 23:37). However, refusal to heed these words will mean that while tax-collectors and sinners experience the salvation that Jesus brings (9:9-13 cf 21:31-32), those who hold on to their own righteousness will miss out and in the end will experience an exile far more devastating than anything which Israel had ever known (see 23:38-24:51).

The above discussion thus enables us to refine our understanding of the identity of '*his people*', the ones whom Jesus came to save. They are not in fact the 'righteous ones' for those who are righteous (at least by their own standards) see no need for salvation except in *socio-political terms*, but only for reward (cf 6:2,5,16). Not so the sinners ! For them forgiveness and the fresh start that such forgiveness brings, is the only hope. It is not that they did not seek the restoration that a phrase like ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν would have brought to mind.¹⁰³ It is just that they, unlike the Pharisees, did not entertain any hope of sharing in that restoration. But that was before they met Jesus, the one who had authority on earth to forgive sins and who, in the light of this authority, had come to call sinners and welcome them into fellowship. In this, as in so much to do with the kingdom of God, 'the last will be first and the first will be last' (20:16). It is to this strange reversal that we turn finally as we consider the third of Matthew's 'statements of purpose.'

¹⁰³ We have already noted elsewhere the importance of so-called *meta-narrative* in the creation of meaningful discourse. It is thus highly inappropriate to ignore the fact that by the 1st century A.D. Jews hearing the phrase 'the kingdom of heaven' would have had well-established and doubtless varied concepts of exactly what such a phrase would have meant and what the immediate result of the 'nearness of the kingdom of heaven' would imply. This point has been discussed in detail by Wright (1996:198-243) and others and need not occupy us here. What we need to re-iterate however is that whatever local variation there may have been it is highly unlikely that anyone among Jesus' Jewish hearers would have understood him to be talking in *non-material* and *a-political* terms as if the coming of the kingdom meant the dissolution of the created order. The Jewish belief in God the creator and the fundamental goodness, though fallenness of creation was too strong for that. What orthodox Jews like their later Christian counterparts were seeking was 'a new heaven **and** a new earth, the home of righteousness' (Isaiah 65:17-25; cf 2 Peter 3:13) not a different order of spiritual existence.

5.3. *The Servant King and the End of the Exile*

Of the three purpose statements that we are considering, there is no doubt that the statement made in 20:28:

ὥσπερ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἦλθεν¹⁰⁴ διακοινηθῆναι ἀλλὰ διακοινησάιναι καὶ δοῦναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν

is the most difficult to interpret and consequently the most controversial.¹⁰⁵ For our purposes we will focus attention on three things.

First, we note that the immediate context of the saying, as far as Matthew's gospel is concerned,¹⁰⁶ is that of a prediction by Jesus of his impending suffering and death (20:17-19) and a subsequent misunderstanding on the part of the disciples, a misunderstanding which, as we noted earlier, forms part of the *conflict* between Jesus and his disciples (cf Hagner 1995:578). The outward expression of this misunderstanding is the request to be given *rank in the kingdom* (20:20-21). Its essence, however, as can be seen from Jesus' response to the disciples (20:25-28), is a fundamental misconception about the *kind of kingdom* that Jesus represents. The kingdom which Jesus represents is not a kingdom of 'rulers' and 'great ones' (οἱ ἄρχοντες...καὶ οἱ μεγάλοι) who exercise 'lordship' (κατακυριεύουσιν αὐτῶν) or 'authority' (κατεξουσιάζουσιν αὐτῶν). It is a kingdom where greatness is measured by service (γενέσθαι ἔσται ὑμῶν διάκονος)

¹⁰⁴ On the significance of ἦλθεν and the expression of purpose in Matthew's gospel see note 66 above. See further Davies & Allison (1988:483); Powell (1992b:195) and Hagner (1995:579).

¹⁰⁵ See further the discussion and bibliographies in Carson (1984:432-34); Davies & Allison (1991:43-52); Hagner (1995:576-583). One of the key areas of controversy regarding Matt 20:28 has been the question of whether this *logion* (or its source in Mark 10:45) can be seen as a conjunction of Daniel 7 with its royal imagery and Isaiah 53 with its image of the Suffering Servant. In favour of such a conjunction see *inter alia* Gundry (1982:404), France (1989:288-292, 300-302), Luz (1995:101-116), Davies & Allison (1991:43-52; 1997:104-103); Hagner (1995:576-83). See also the very comprehensive discussion in Gundry (1993:58-93) in connection with Mark 10:45 in which Gundry has altered his view regarding Isaiah 53 as background to the saying.

¹⁰⁶ Matthew follows Mark (*contra* Luke) not only by placing the dispute among the disciples in the context of the journey to Jerusalem, rather than the supper in the upper room, but also by including the reference to Jesus as 'Son of Man' who came δοῦναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν. Although Luke omits this clause, he nevertheless sets Jesus' identification of himself as ὡς ὁ διακονῶν clearly in the context of Jesus' impending death. For further discussion of the redaction-critical issues involved see Hagner (1995:578-83) and Davies & Allison (1997:83-95).

and where pride of place goes to the one who is willing to be a ‘slave’ (ἔσται ὑμῶν δοῦλος). It is, in other words, a kingdom patterned not upon the rulers and great ones of the Gentiles (vs 25), but upon Jesus the Son of Man who ‘did not come to be served, but to serve, και δοῦναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν’ (20:28). This latter clause, taken by the majority of commentators to be *epexegetical*, has been the focus on a great deal of debate, not least in terms of its historical-critical authenticity.¹⁰⁷ But seen from a narrative critical perspective, its presence at this point in Matthew’s story and in the mouth of Jesus, Matthew’s primary character, makes perfect sense. It makes sense firstly because, as we noted earlier, the point of *conflict resolution* within Matthew’s gospel is found in the death of Jesus and it is thus entirely appropriate for Jesus to speak about the *fact* of his death in the course of conflict with his disciples. It makes sense, secondly, because it is entirely appropriate that Jesus should explain the *significance* of his death to his disciples at a point in the story when the geographical focus shifts toward Jerusalem, the *place of conflict resolution* (cf 20:17) and when its temporal perspective shifts the time of Jesus death, the *moment of conflict resolution*.

Second, we note that both the terminology and the imagery of 20:28 is entirely consistent with Matthew’s gospel as a whole. First, we note that the term *Son of Man* occurs some thirty two times in Matthew’s gospel¹⁰⁸ spanning, in my opinion, the three usages referred to earlier, viz a description of the earthly activity of Jesus (e g 8:17, 20; 9:6, 11:19), a description of his suffering and humiliation (e g 20:18, 28; 26:24,45) and, most frequently in Matthew, a description of his future vindication and exaltation (e g 16:27; 24:30-31). Now the *background* of the term *Son of Man* in 20:28 and its consequent *significance* at this point in Matthew’s story has been a matter of intense debate. Part of the reason for this is that scholars have tended to locate the background to the term Son of Man in Daniel 7:13-14 only in those instances where the context is that of *exaltation* and *vindication* (usually expressed by judicial language) or, as is the case in Matthew 24:1 - 25:46, where language suggestive of Daniel 7 such as ‘coming’, ‘clouds’ and ‘kingdom’

¹⁰⁷ See e g Davies & Allison (1997:94-101), Hagner (1995:582-83), Carson (1984:433-34).

¹⁰⁸ Luz (1995:112-13) lists the various occurrences of the term, but while arriving at the correct total, seems to have made some arithmetical error. The frequency of the term is 6x in 12:1-16:20 (not 7), 9x in 16:21-20:34 (not 8), 8x (not 7) in the Apocalyptic Discourse (chap 24-25) and 5x (not 6) in chap 26. There are only 4 occurrences of the term before 12:1 viz 8:20; 9:6; 10:23 and 11:19. It is this absence of the term from the so-called prologue which *inter alia* leads Kingsbury (1988: 96-102) to argue that *Son of Man* functions as a ‘technical term’ rather than a ‘title’.

occurs. But there are, in my opinion, good reasons to concur with those scholars, who do see the term Son of Man in 20:28 as a reference to *that* Son of Man, viz the Son of Man of Daniel 7:13-14 (Davies & Allison 1991:48 note b; 1997:94). First, the term ἦλθεν (20:28) recalls the language of the ‘coming of one like a Son of Man’ (ἐρχόμενος ἦν LXX -Daniel 7:13) although its association with servanthood and death comes as something of a surprise (see below). Second, while it is true that the phrase δοῦναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ λύτρον ἅντὶ πολλῶν refers uniquely to Jesus as far as the redemptive component is concerned, it is also clear both from 20:22 and 20:26-28 and the term ὥσπερ that there is close association between Jesus as the Son of Man and the disciples. In the words of Morna Hooker, commenting upon the Markan passion predictions, Jesus is ‘always linked in the context with his followers who are expected to share both his suffering and his glory’ (1967:181).¹⁰⁹ The same close association is true in Daniel 7:13-18 where the Son of Man is so closely associated with the saints of the most high, that some commentators take them to be synonymous. Third, as we noted above, a reference to Jesus’ death is by no means contrary to the ideas of vindication that one might more naturally associate with the term Son of Man. By going to the cross and giving his life Jesus brings God’s purpose for his life to *fulfilment* and so-doing *achieves salvation* for God’s people, here referred to as πολλῶν.

A second point to note with respect to the terminology and imagery of 20:28 is that Matthew, sometimes following his source but frequently in his own terms, on a number of occasions describes Jesus’ ministry in relation to that of the *Servant of the Lord* described within the so-called Servant Songs of the book of Isaiah. This is clearly the case in the two distinctly Matthean formula quotations in 8:17 (*cf* Isaiah 53:4) and 12:18-21 (*cf* Isaiah 42:1-4), both of which describe Jesus’ ministry of healing explicitly in terms of the so-called Servant Songs. But there are also instances such as 26:27-28 (*cf* Isaiah 53:12) and 27:12 (*cf* Isaiah 53:7) where Matthew alludes to the Servant Songs and in particular the suffering of the servant (Davies & Allison 1997:96; France 1989:300-302). In my opinion, just such an allusion underlies 20:28. There are three reasons for holding to this view. First, despite the reality of *linguistic variation* between

¹⁰⁹ Although this theme of *imitation* is present in Mark, it is emphasised by Matthew. This can be seen both from Matthew’s mention of the fact that Jesus specifically took the twelve aside (κατ’ ἰδίαν-20:17) to repeat his earlier prediction of his impending death thus stressing the *didactic* setting of Jesus’ later words, and from the fact that he changes Mark’s καὶ γὰρ to ὥσπερ in an otherwise verbatim passage, thus introducing directly the idea of imitation (Gundry 1982:404).

20:28 and the LXX of Isaiah 53,¹¹⁰ a case can be made for seeing Isaiah 53 as the background to Matthew 20:28, especially if, as Davies & Allison (1997:95) suggest, οὐκ ἦλθεν διακοινηθῆναι ἀλλὰ διακοιῆσαι καὶ δοῦναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν ‘is translation Greek’ and comparison should thus be with the MT rather than LXX. If this view is taken, then a number of linguistic affinities can be noted (*cf* Davies & Allison 1997:95-96). Second, as Hagner (1995:582) has correctly noted, ‘the lack of actual linguistic parallels...cannot obscure the significant conceptual parallels. It is simply too easy to insist on the difference of the words and to attribute different nuances to them, while at the same time ignoring their similarities. In both passages one who has been designated as rendering service gives his life for the salvation of the people.’

This reference to the ‘salvation of the people’, highlights an important point regarding 20:28 and its link to Isaiah 53, a point which is frequently overlooked in discussion. As we noted earlier, the word ἦλθεν relates δοῦναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν directly to Jesus’ mission to ‘save his people from their sins’ (1:21). But, as we have also argued earlier in support of Wright’s basic thesis (Wright 1992, 1996), this mission can also be described in terms of Jesus’ coming to bring an end to the exile of his people. Seen in this light, the description in Matthew 20:28 of Jesus’ role as the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53, is entirely appropriate. The second major section of the book of Isaiah begins in 40:1-2 with a promise of comfort for God’s people (τὸν λαόν μου- LXX Isaiah 40:1), a comfort which involves an *exodus-like* return from captivity and exile (Isaiah 40:3-5, *cf* 52:7-12) and which is made possible because ‘her (Jerusalem’s) sin has been paid for’ (λέλυται¹¹¹ αὐτῆς ἡ ἁμαρτία- LXX Is 40:2). No explanation is given at this stage for how the sins have been dealt with, merely a declaration that they have. But by the end of Isaiah Part II, an answer has been given. The desolate cities will be resettled (54:3); disgrace, shame and reproach will be removed (54:4); full and free pardon will be given to all who seek the LORD (55:1-7); and all of this because of the work of the Servant, who ‘bore the sins of

¹¹⁰ This lack of linguistic affinity with LXX, particularly with respect to verbal forms, was one of the primary reasons why Barrett (1959:1-18) and Hooker (1959) argued against an Isaianic background for Mark 10:45, Matthew’s source for this logion.

¹¹¹ It is somewhat surprising that in discussing the use of λύτρον in Matthew 20:28 and Mark 10:45 (a *hapaxlegomenon* in the New Testament), scholars do not refer to the presence of its cognate λέλυται in Isaiah 40:2, a verse of central importance, for a clear understanding of the significance of the Servant’s work.

many, and was delivered up because of their iniquities' (καὶ αὐτὸς ἁμαρτίας πολλῶν ἀνῆνεγκεν καὶ διὰ τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν παρεδόθη - LXX Isaiah 53:12). The exile of God's people will end (51:17-52:12) because of the representative and vicarious death of the Servant, the Righteous Sufferer upon whom the LORD has laid the iniquity of his people (κύριος παρέδωκεν αὐτὸν ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ἡμῶν - LXX Isaiah 53:6).

What Isaiah 52:12-53:13 achieves in the second part of the book of Isaiah, viz an explanation of how it is that the exile of God's people will be brought to an end, Matthew 20:28 achieves in terms of the overall plot of the Gospel. Jesus will save his people from their sins (1:21) by giving his own life as a substitutionary atonement (λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν), a ransom price by which their liberation from the devastating consequences of their sins is secured. But the connection goes beyond that of mere analogy. Jesus comes not merely in imitation of the Servant's work, but in fulfilment of it (cf Matthew 8:17; 12:17). What God promised his people through the mouth of his prophet Isaiah, viz the end of their exile and their consequent participation in the blessing and rest of the kingdom of God, has finally been brought to fulfilment through Jesus, the Son of Man and Suffering Servant.

Third, we note, in the light of the above discussion, that Matthew 20:28 thus presents a very striking juxtaposition between the *Son of Man* to whom is given 'the authority, glory and sovereign power' (ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ ἡ τιμὴ καὶ ἡ βασιλεία) and whom 'all peoples, nations and men of every language will serve' (πάντες οἱ λαοὶ φυλαί γλώσσαι αὐτῷ δουλεύουσιν) (Daniel 7:14 LXX) and the *Suffering Servant* (Isaiah 52:13-53:12) who has come 'not to be served, but to serve' by giving his life as a ransom for many.¹¹² Such a juxtaposition of *dominion* and *service*, of *kingship* and *suffering* striking though it may be, is in fact typical of Matthew's presentation

¹¹² The words of Cullman (1963:161), dated though they are, are still worth noting: 'Both the 'Suffering Servant' and 'Son of Man' already existed in Judaism. But Jesus' combination of precisely *these* two titles was something completely new. 'Son of Man' represents the highest conceivable declaration of exaltation in Judaism; *ebed Yahweh* is the expression of deep humiliation. Even if there really was a concept of a suffering Messiah in Judaism, it cannot be proved that suffering was combined precisely with the idea of the idea of the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven. This is the unheard-of new act of Jesus, that he united these two apparently contradictory tasks in his self-consciousness, and that he expressed that union in his life and teaching.' Cf France (1989:290); Davies & Allison (1991:49-50; 1997:97 note 85).

of Jesus.¹¹³ It is present in the account of his persecution by Herod (2:13-18) even though he is the one born βασιλεὺς τῶν ἰουδαίων (2:2). It is perhaps hinted at in the description of Jesus in 2:23 as Ναζωραῖος.¹¹⁴ It is certainly present in the account of Jesus' baptism (3:13-17) and in the ensuing account of his test in the wilderness (4:1-11). In both accounts the title *Son of God* (Divinely anointed King) is used of Jesus. In both accounts Jesus, though King, submits himself to the righteous will of God (3:15) and to the service of God alone (4:10). And in both Jesus receives divine approval, first in a declaration by God himself (3:17) and second, in the form of angelic service (ἄγγελοι προσῆλθον καὶ διηκόνουν αὐτῷ - 4:11). It is, however, particularly in terms of the Divine declaration in 3:17 that the juxtaposition is given its most important early expression for, as we noted above, this declaration combines Psalm 2:7-9, a statement about God's Anointed King with Isaiah 42:1, a statement about his Spirit anointed Servant. The effect of this combination is to identify the role of the Son and the Servant, or to put it more precisely, to alert the reader of Matthew's gospel to the kind of *kingship* which will characterise Jesus, the Servant King.¹¹⁵ It is this practice of *kingship through service* which characterises Jesus the healer and teacher (Matthew 4:23-5:1; 9:35-38). But it is supremely present in Jesus, the Son

¹¹³ Although it is only the Fourth Gospel which explicitly associates the 'lifting up' of Jesus, the Son of Man on the cross with the *glorification* of the Son by the Father (John 12:20-36), Matthew, like the other synoptics, has numerous references to the *kingship* of Jesus on the cross (see e.g. 27:11, 27-31, 37-40).

¹¹⁴ See Luz (1989:148-50). See however Davies & Allison (1988:276-77) for an alternative, and very persuasive view, of the meaning of the term 'Nazarene.' Perhaps a deliberate ambiguity itself an expression of the dominion / suffering juxtaposition is intended.

¹¹⁵ This image of the Servant King is of course in marked contrast to the 'king like the nations' which Israel requested in the days of Samuel (1 Samuel 8:1-22). The alternative to this kind of king in the Deuteronomic History was the 'king after the LORD's own heart' (1 Samuel 13:14), a king epitomised at their best, first by David and then by Solomon and later idealised in the rule of the eschatological *Son of David* (e.g. Isaiah 9:1-7).

of Man who came to give ¹¹⁶ his life as a ransom for many.¹¹⁷ It is to this path¹¹⁸ that Jesus, the Son of David, the Son of Man, the Servant of the Lord unflinchingly commits himself. And it is in this light that the *actual* reader of Matthew's gospel is challenged to affirm him, repudiating the jeers of those who should have known better (27:32-44) and confessing with the 'centurion and those with him': 'Ἀληθῶς θεοῦ υἱὸς ἦν οὗτος - 'truly he was the King' !

6. Conclusion

In the light of our study of the plot of Matthew's gospel we can now summarise several important points and draw a number of important conclusions.

First, we can affirm that Matthew's gospel is indeed *a story about Jesus* and that recognizing and studying it as a narrative not only greatly enhances our understanding of the gospel's message but also serves to confront the reader with the *person of Jesus*, and the *significance* of his words and deeds, especially his death. By means of this encounter with the story of Jesus, the reader is, as it were, *included* into the narrative world, is invited to *evaluate* the various responses to Jesus' words and works and, ideally, to *share* that point of view concerning Jesus which the narrative sets forth as normative. This point of view can be summarised in two parts. First, it is that Jesus is indeed 'the Christ, the Son of the living God' (16:16 *cf* 3:17). Second, it is that Jesus must fulfill his God-given vocation by 'going up to Jerusalem' where as Son of Man he 'will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law,' handed over 'to the Gentiles to be mocked

¹¹⁶ The use of the words ἦλθεν and δοῦναι though they apply here to what theologians would call the *first* coming of Christ, nevertheless call to mind the language of Daniel 7:13-14 where one like a son of Man 'comes' with the clouds of heaven and 'is given' a kingdom by the Ancient of Days. This same imagery is later used in Matthew to describe the παρουσίαι of the Son of Man, the so-called *second* coming. For a proposal concerning 'An early form of the 'two parousias' schema' focussing on 'the humility of the earthly life of Jesus as Son of David, the glory of his future coming as Son of Man and judge, and the contrast between the two comings' see Stanton (1992a:185-89).

¹¹⁷ The term πολλῶν though it can be seen as a synonym for 'all' (*cf* 1 Timothy 2:6), should probably, in the light of the link with 1:21, be taken to refer to 'his people', that is, those whom Jesus came to save, not only from among the 'lost sheep of Israel' (10:6) but also from among all the nations (28:20).

¹¹⁸ In this sense, Luz (1995:113) is surely correct when he states that 'the expression 'Son of Man' thus refers to Jesus' path as a whole, from his earthly existence to his final consummation.'

and flogged and crucified...and on the third day...raised to life' (20:17-19 *cf* 16:21; 17:22-23).¹¹⁹

Second, we can affirm that Matthew is, in particular, a story about Jesus who 'will save his people from their sins' (1:21), *i.e.* who will usher in the *new aeon* of blessing (5:1-11) and rest (11:28) which characterises the *rule of God* or to use Matthew's own phrase, ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν. This 'coming of the kingdom' is depicted in various ways in the gospel - in healings, in exorcisms and in teaching (4:23-25; 9:35-38). But it has at its centre, Jesus' action with respect to sin and sinners. In this regard, Matthew's gospel brings the reader face to face with Jesus, who as the Son of Man, 'has authority on earth to forgive sins' (9:6), 'to call sinners' (9:13) and who gives 'his life as a ransom for many' (20:28). These three facts are closely related. For sinners to be saved, they must be both called and forgiven by Jesus. But this can only happen if Jesus lays down his life for them, bearing their sins, purchasing their freedom. This he did, and thus he secured salvation from sin for all who will follow him and submit to his words (7:24-27; 28:18-20).

Third, we have noted that this 'salvation' can be described in terms of *restoration from exile*. This key insight is alluded to in Matthew's salvation historical summary which sets the backdrop for his story of Jesus (1:1-17) and is reinforced by a series of Old Testament quotations and allusions. Indeed, in my opinion, it provides the key to Matthew's choice of Old Testament texts and to the understanding of his application of those texts. It also helps to solve one of the classic questions with respect to Matthew's *missiological* perspective *viz* the seeming contradiction between the *exclusivity* of 10:5-6 and the *universalism* of 28:20. Jesus is indeed the one in whom the Old Testament promises of the restoration of God's people, Israel, find their fulfilment.¹²⁰ But he is far more. For by bringing restoration to Israel as the Faithful Israelite and Suffering Servant, he has opened the door for the salvation of all outsiders and so has become the true Son of Abraham in whom all the nations are blessed (1:1; 28:20).

¹¹⁹ The use of the present and future tenses in these statements of Peter and Jesus reflect the *story time* of the narrative. But they also draw the reader into the narrative world, thus enhancing the *inclusiveness* of the narrative and inviting the reader to respond to what is said about Jesus.

¹²⁰ The two-fold nature of this fulfilment touched on above in terms of the *two comings of Jesus* will be discussed more fully elsewhere.

Fourth, we note that at its deepest level, Matthew's gospel is a story about God and his saving purposes for the world, a story which spans the history of Israel, but which finds its ultimate fulfilment in the death and consequent resurrection of Jesus, the True Israelite, God's Son. Within this story the deeds and teaching of Jesus play a vital part. Beyond the death, the resurrection stands as the divine affirmation of the efficacy of that death and as the starting point of a new story for the world in association with Jesus the King (28:16-20). But it is at the cross that sin is forgiven (26:28) and its power broken (20:28), at the cross that the 'strong man', that ancient enemy the devil, is finally bound and his 'possessions' carried off (*cf* 12:29-32), at the cross that the way is opened back to God (27:51), that return from exile is secured for all who will turn to Jesus as saviour (1:21) and submit to him as Lord (28:19-20). Matthew's story is God's story, and because of Jesus, that story is good news indeed !

Chapter 5. Exile, Restoration and Matthew's use of the Old Testament

1. Introduction

The question of the use of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Matthew is one which has received considerable attention in scholarly discussion.¹ This fact comes as no surprise for as Stanton *inter alia* observes, 'quotations and allusions to Old Testament passages are even more prominent in Matthew than they are in the other three gospels' (Stanton 1992a:346).² The debate has tended to centre on the so-called *Reflexionszitate* or *formula quotations*,³ which, according to Stanton (1992a:346), have 'long intrigued scholars' and have 'dominated discussion of Matthew's use of the Old Testament' (cf Senior 1997b:89-90). More recently however questions have been raised about this pre-occupation with the formula quotations and the consequent neglect of other aspects of Matthew's use of the Old Testament which, as Stanton (1992a:346) rightly reminds us, 'is woven into the warp and woof' of Matthew's gospel. In the course of the debate a number of key questions have been raised,⁴ the most prominent of which we will note by way of introduction, even though a detailed discussion of all the issues involved cannot be undertaken here.

¹ For a summary of the history of the scholarly debate and the issues at stake see *inter alia* Gundry (1967:1-5); Van Segbroeck (1972:107-130); France (1989:166-205); Luz (1989:156-164); Stanton (1992a:346-353); Senior (1996:51-61, 1997b:90-115).

² Thus e.g. Soares Prabhu (1976:18): 'No evangelist makes so much - and such explicit - use of the Old Testament as Matthew'; Hagner (1993:liv): 'there are...more than twice as many than any other Gospel'; Senior (1996:51): 'Any careful reader of Matthew's gospel is struck by the manner and frequency with which the evangelist appeals to the Old Testament.' Cf also Senior (1997b:89); Riches (1996:62-63).

³ Soares Prabhu (1976:19) defines these 'formula quotations' as 'a group of special quotations characterised by at least three distinctive common features: (1) a striking fulfilment formula, whose key word is the passive of the verb πληροῦν; (2) a commentary function, in as much as they are 'asides' of the evangelist, and not part of his narrative; and (3) a mixed text form, which is closer to the Hebrew than the strongly Septuagintal text of the other Gospel quotations.' (Cf Senior 1997b:93 note 10). Traditionally these quotations have been referred to as *Reflexionszitate* in order to differentiate them from the apparently more contextualised *Kontextzitate*, but since the work of Rothfuchs (1969), the term *Erfüllungszitate* (fulfilment quotations) has been preferred in certain circles. So e.g. Hagner (1993:liv) and Luz (1985:134-180). Stanton (1992a:347-48) however points to the lack of precision when this latter term is translated into English and so maintains the traditional term 'formula quotations.' Interestingly enough the English translation of Luz (1989:156 note 1) adopts similar usage. See further Soares Prabhu (1976:18-23) for a detailed analysis of the terms.

⁴ Senior (1996:52) identifies three major questions with regard to the *formula quotations*, but they are relevant to Matthew's use of the Old Testament in general. These are (1) the question of the *text form* of the quotations, (2) the question of the *origin* of the quotations and (3) the question of the *purpose* of the quotations. A more comprehensive list is found in Longenecker (1995:11).

2. Key Questions regarding Matthew's use of the Old Testament

The first key question which has been raised by scholars concerns the *definition of terms* and the 'complementary' question of the *identification of references*⁵ in the light of such definition (cf Soares Prabhu 1976:18). What references are there to the Old Testament within Matthew's gospel and how are these references to be defined and described? Nor is the latter question to be ignored despite the fact, as Stanley Porter has pointed out, that in the course of the debate '.... many simply do not define their terms, and most attempts to do so fail to provide the kind of definitions necessary....' (Porter 1997:88).⁶ The fundamental issue is that '.... labels have a heuristic value, and end up shaping the interpretation of the evidence at hand, even if the admitted facts run contrary to this' (1997:92). Thus a functional definition such as 'formula quotation' can, albeit unintentionally, result in the lens of scholarly endeavour being focussed on a particular kind of quotation with a resultant neglect of other important aspects of the use of the Old Testament in Matthew's gospel such as '....the evangelist's modifications of the quotations found in his sources and the additional references he includes without using his 'introductory formula'' (Stanton 1992a:346).⁷ The problem is not the investigation of the formula quotations *per se*, but the presentation of the results of such a specialist study as representative of the whole. One certainly cannot draw comprehensive and balanced conclusions about Matthew's use of the Old Testament if, as has sometimes been the case, one places too much weight on some quotations to the neglect or exclusion of others. With this in mind Senior (1997b:90) complains that '....the formula quotations have been something of a 'siren song', with attention to the peculiar features of the formula quotations skewing a fuller appreciation of the role of the Old Testament in Matthew's gospel.' Similarly, a minimalist approach to categories such as *allusion*

⁵ In addition to the lists provided by Stendahl (1968) and Gundry (1967) see also Huck & Greeven (1981); Nestle - Aland (1988:66*-69*, 1-87); Aland *et al* (1993:770-806); Bratcher (1987:1-11) and Davies & Allison (1988:34-57). See also O' Rourke (1994:16-18).

⁶ Porter's assessment which is largely based on Pauline scholarship, may be overly pessimistic with regard to studies of Matthew's use of the Old Testament. Although Porter does reference Gundry's work on Matthew, he fails to note the work of Moo (1983:18-21) in which the latter attempts to give a working definition of various terms such as 'explicit quotation', 'implicit quotation', 'allusion' and the like. See also Soares Prabhu (1976:18 note 1) and Senior (1997b:89 note 1).

⁷ In this regard it is worth noting the reminder from the proponents of *composition criticism* and *narrative criticism*, that quotations taken over unmodified from the source are just as important for one's understanding of the evangelist's theology or point of view as those which show evidence of modification.

might, as Gundry (1967:2) argued, lead to ‘the neglect ...of the *allusive* quotations and their text form’, while a failure to carefully define the precise *form* and appropriate *function* of such allusions might well result in illegitimate conclusions being drawn on the basis of such allusions.⁸ Are we therefore to treat the matter of definition as the *sine qua non* of discussion of Matthew’s use of the Old Testament or to affirm that consensus on this matter is the touchstone for further debate? Not at all. Important though this matter of definition is for a comprehensive identification and study of Old Testament references within Matthew’s gospel, it is in my opinion wise to concur with Porter (1997:94-95) that the formulation of a common descriptive terminology that ‘all could willingly use... is an unreasonable expectation’ and that ‘therefore, short of a common language, interpreters should be clear in their own terminology and the application thereof.’ We shall return to this matter of definition and identification again at a later stage in the chapter.

Second, there is the question of the ‘*text forms*’ of the Old Testament references in Matthew, in particular those of the quotations and allusions.⁹ This question is of some significance because during the course of the debate about Matthew’s use of the Old Testament, decisions about text form have had far-reaching implications for conclusions about *tradition* and *redaction*, the origin of the quotations¹⁰ and consequently the origin and setting of the gospel as well as, in the case of redaction criticism, the theology of the evangelist. The matter is a complex one and one in which,

⁸ The work of Gundry (1967) broke fresh ground with regard to the importance of the allusions to the Old Testament in the synoptic gospels. Gundry (1967:4-5) recognized that the practice of ‘deciding whether an instance of verbal parallelism between OT and NT really constitutes an allusive quotation often presents a delicate task’ (cf Kaiser 1985:2) and sought thus to avoid the inclusion of what he calls more ‘doubtful allusions’ noted by some earlier works. (See Gundry 1967:5 note 1). He nevertheless maintained that if ‘recognizable thought-connection’ rather than demands concerning minimum numbers of parallel words and LXX text form compliance are made the criteria for judgement, then ‘we are free to recognize many significant OT allusions.’ Stanton (1992a:353) while acknowledging the value of Gundry’s ‘careful presentation of the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek textual traditions that are relevant for the study of references to the OT in Matthew’ questions the legitimacy of Gundry’s use of allusive quotations in his study of the text form of the Matthean quotations of the Old Testament. See however the comments by Gundry (1967:2-5) which pre-empt Stanton’s criticism, but which Stanton does not address.

⁹ See *inter alia* Dodd (1953); Stendahl (1954, 1968:i-xiv); Gundry (1967); Soares-Prabhu (1976:63-106); Wilcox (1979:231-43; 1988: 193-204); Davies & Allison (1988:32-58); Luz (1989:156-64); Stanton (1992a:346-63).

¹⁰ For a summary and critical discussion of views regarding the origin of the Old Testament quotations in Matthew’s gospel see *inter alia* Gundry (1967:151-78); Soares Prabhu (1976:45-106); Davies & Allison (1997:573-77).

especially in the light of ongoing scholarly discussion, it is unwise to be dogmatic.¹¹ For example, in 1968 Krister Stendahl, in a revised edition of his classic work (1968:i-xiv), urged caution with respect to some of his earlier views regarding the creativity of a Matthean school in the light of further discoveries from Qumran. He acknowledged that:

....new data are about to allow new and better founded hypotheses about text forms available in the first century A.D. Such a promising yet unfinished state of affairs both hinders and helps further progress in the study of the Matthean quotations. It makes it more probable that readings found in Matthew could witness to text forms actually available in Greek prior to Matthew. It makes recourse to testimonies less compelling as an explanation of textual peculiarities. It strengthens the suggestion that Hebrew texts continued to cause revision of Greek texts. And we are increasingly informed that the O.T. text - Greek and Hebrew- was not yet standardised.

(1968:iv)

To these comments we can add those of Brown (1993:103) who, commending Stendahl for alerting scholars to the fact that there were in the first century ‘a multiplicity of textual traditions of Scripture - not just a standardised Hebrew (MT) and Greek (LXX) tradition, but variant Hebrew wordings, Aramaic targums and a number of Greek translations including some that conformed more closely to the MT than does the LXX’ then concludes ‘when we add to these the possibility of a free rendering by the evangelist himself, the avenue of deciding what citation is Matthean and what is pre-Matthean on the basis of wording becomes uncertain.’ The point made by Brown has received further support in a more recent article (1997a:18-27) by Christopher Stanley who argues that the practice of ‘free quotation’ of the Old Testament by New Testament writers was entirely in keeping with the social environment of the New Testament era so that ‘from oral recitations to ‘rewritten’ texts to the practices of a dominant scribal culture, written works were handled in a way that valued ‘interpretive freedom’ over slavish adherence

¹¹ The complexity of the issue is highlighted, quite apart from uncertainties about extant text forms, by the following comment by Soares Prabhu (1976:63) with regard to the formula quotations: ‘Worse still, the quotations do not present a uniform, if unusual text type. Their agreement with or difference from the LXX and / or the Masoretic text differs from quotation to quotation.’

to the original text' (1997a:26).¹²

But this entirely appropriate caution with regard to possible text forms underlying the Old Testament quotations does not mean that we are unable to draw any positive conclusions from the study of the quotations and allusions in Matthew's gospel at all. Thus there seems to be a growing consensus among scholars with regard to the following: (1) It is not the 'mixed' text form of the formula quotations that is unique, but rather 'the way the evangelist applies these to the life of Jesus' (Senior 1996:58).¹³ (2) Contrary to the view that the LXX was 'Matthew's Bible'¹⁴ there is clear evidence that 'Matthew's primary allegiance is to the textual form of the quotations in his sources rather than to the LXX as such' (Stanton 1992a:358) and that where Matthew does effect changes, such changes are in keeping with his usual redactional practices rather than reflective of some attempt to conform a quotation to the LXX (*cf* Stanton 1992a:355). (3) The introductory formulas are undoubtedly the work of the evangelist himself.¹⁵ Furthermore

¹² The basic thrust of Stanley's argument is that the modern demand for verbatim quotation of an original text is entirely foreign to the Graeco-Roman world which formed the social environment for the New Testament. This is not because of any specific emphasis upon oral rather than literary aspects of the culture, but rather because of the way in which 'citizens of the ancient world would have encountered the 'text' of a literary composition' (1997a:21). For the Jewish community this would have involved primarily, though not exclusively, 'the public reading and translation of the Scriptures that took place in the synagogue every Sabbath and at festivals.' Stanley points out that such reading and translation took place against the backdrop of a well established practice of re-interpretation and application to a new generation (seen for example in the book of Deuteronomy itself) and that 'constant exposure to such 'interpretive renderings' within the pages of Scripture itself would have shaped the expectations of the most illiterate listeners' (:22). In his opinion the growth of the 'oral Torah' further 'reinforced this blurring of the lines between text and interpretation in early Judaism.' As far as the '*literati*' of Graeco-Roman society were concerned the practice of 'interpretive renderings' was reinforced by exposure to such texts as found in the so-called 're-written Bible' (e.g. *Jubilees*, *Pseudo Philo*) (Stanley :22), even for those with access to primary texts of the Jewish scriptures. Whether one agrees with Stanley's overall thesis or not, the evidence that he presents in his article underlines the difficulty involved with regard to the text form of the Old Testament quotations. See also the comments by Longenecker ([1975]1995:21-22) who affirms a greater loyalty to 'the original text' on the part of the Targumists, while still conceding the practice of interpretive renderings.

¹³ Senior in expressing this view aligns himself with Gundry (1967:xi) who acknowledging the 'mixed text form' of the formula quotations went on to demonstrate that 'in the other Matthean quotations and allusions not in parallel with Mark...no consistent bias for the Septuagint is found and there is evidence of the same 'mixed' form detectable in the formula quotations' (Senior 1997b:92). In Gundry's own words: 'Formal quotations which Mt shares with Mk are almost purely Septuagintal. In all other strata of synoptic quotation material - formal and allusive, Marcan, Lucan and peculiarly Matthean - the text form is very mixed.'

¹⁴ Thus *inter alia* Stendhal (1968); Strecker (1969) and more recently Luz (1989), *contra* Gundry (1967); Soares Prabhu (1976); Davies & Allison (1989); Stanton (1992a) and Senior (1997b).

¹⁵ Soares Prabhu (1976:62-63) concludes his study of the fulfilment formulas with the observation that 'Matthew is certainly responsible for the various modifications of the *Grundform*, all of which are intentional changes adapting the formula to its context. He is probably responsible for the *Grundform* too.' See also Stanton

the fusion of ‘quotation’ and ‘context’¹⁶ which was acknowledged with the so-called *Kontextzitate* appears to be true for the *Reflexionszitate* or ‘formula quotations’ as well. This as we shall see below has important implications for one’s conclusions about the function and purpose of the Old Testament quotations and hence about the evangelist’s point of view and underlying theology.¹⁷

Third, then, we turn to the question of the *function* and *purpose* of the quotations and allusions. Since, as we noted above, this question is of particular importance for our investigation of Matthew’s theology, we will discuss it in greater detail. As one would expect, a number of proposals have been put forward, particularly since the advent of redaction critical studies of Matthew’s gospel.

According to **Georg Strecker** ([1962]1971:49-85), the introductory formulae of the formula quotations are redactional, but the quotations themselves are imported by the evangelist under the rubric of fulfilment. The novelty here is not the fulfilment theme *per se* which was part of the ancient Christian tradition, but the manner in which Matthew has incorporated the fulfilment motif into his work. This is done by apparently forcing the somewhat ‘pedantically adopted’ quotations (Stanton 1992a:352) into the text without any ‘intrinsic relationship to the surrounding context’ (Senior 1996:56) (*cf* Strecker [1962]1971:84: ‘*Die Verklammerung der Zitate mit dem*

(1992a:359); Davies & Allison (1988:211 note 37).

¹⁶ The relationship between the formula quotations and the narrative in which they have been placed has often been described in exclusive *either / or* terms *ie* either the narrative gave birth to the quotation or the quotation gave birth to the narrative. Both Soares Prabhu (1976:159-61) and France (1989:176-81) have shown, conclusively in my opinion, that it is better to see the relationship between the quotations and their narrative setting as a dialectical one. In the words of Soares Prabhu (1976:159-60): ‘....we find the relation of quotation to context is more complex than any simple one-way adaption of context to quotation, or quotation to context. The relation is dialectical: context and quotation each influences and is influenced by the other.’

¹⁷ Soares Prabhu (1976:160-61) continues his discussion of the dialectical relationship between quotation and context with the following comment: ‘But behind both quotation and context there stands a third and controlling factor, Matthew’s ‘theology’: that is, his understanding of the event narrated, in the passage to which the quotation has been attached, as this has come down to him in the tradition of his community. Matthew’s theology is thus itself a dialectic of personal interpretation and an (already interpreted !) Community tradition.....’ He goes on to describe the process as follows: ‘An Old Testament passage is interpreted christologically in the light of Matthew’s own understanding of an event in the life of Jesus, as this has come down to him in his tradition; and his narrative of the event is written up in function of the adapted OT text. Theologized tradition - interpreted quotation - adapted narrative: this is the hermeneutical sequence underlying Matthew’s insertion of the formula quotations into his Gospel.’ See also the discussion in Stanton (1992a:360-63).

Kontext'). The result of this is that the formula quotations serve to highlight 'the *heilsgeschichtlich* significance of the events of the life of Jesus' (Soares Prabhu 1976:22) by setting the '*Geschichte Jesu*' as a 'chronologically and geographically distant event' (Stanton 1992a:352). According to Strecker's own summary, the 'formula-quotations presuppose, in accordance with their pre-Matthean meaning, that the promises of God to the people of Israel have found *fulfilment* in the life of Jesus. This means on the other hand that the promises found fulfilment in the *life of Jesus*. Without doubt Matthew emphasised the latter since the quotations are connected with temporal and above all geographical statements about the life of Jesus.... This means that Matthew uses the formula quotations to interpret the history of Jesus as a unique event, temporally and geographically distant from his own situation. The inclusion of these quotations in the Gospel expresses the historical-biographical tendency of the redactor' (1983:72, cf Senior 1996:56). In Strecker's view, the objective of this 'historicizing tendency' by the redactor was a first step in resolving a tension in the relationship between the 'historical' and the 'eschatological' (cf Strecker [1962]1971:47), a tension brought about, in Strecker's opinion, as a result of the delay in the parousia (Strecker 1983:69-70).

But, says Strecker, Matthew's treatment of the synoptic traditions, including of course OT material beyond that contained in the formula quotations, goes beyond a mere historicization into the 'time of preparation', 'the time of Jesus' and the 'time of the church'. Matthew also subjects the traditional material to 'an *ethicization*' (1983:74). This is evidenced by Matthew's handling of the traditional 'sayings material' which he has 'combined ...into five blocks of speeches and ...underscored ...in the framework of his gospel with five similarly composed formulae.' This demonstrates that 'according to Matthew's understanding, the time of Jesus is a time of proclamation, in which the ethical demand is raised.' This ethical demand was what 'the period prior to Jesus had as its aim, for the people of Israel had rejected the demanding will of God proclaimed by the OT prophets....' and it is found in the proclamation of Jesus as 'an ethical-practicable rule' (1983:75), a rule which is appropriate to the 'time of the church', in particular to that of Matthew's community. This can be observed for example by Matthew's tendency to mitigate 'originally more rigorous' demands (cf Matthew 5:32, 19:9) and to express ethical demands in the form of principle, particularly the principle of love for God and for one's neighbour (cf Matthew 7:12, 22:37-40). But this does not mean that, according to Matthew,

Jesus' demand for the time of the church is not 'radical and far-reaching'. On the contrary, says Strecker (1983:75-77), Matthew's Jesus radically demands 'an identity between external and internal attitude' thus claiming 'more than the Pharisaic tradition.' Furthermore 'it appeals to the OT in the sense of claiming to be the fulfilment and not the abolition of the OT commandments' while at the same time not being 'identical in detail with the OT law.' It is in fact the 'law of the *kyrios*, whose authority is not of a derivable sort but can be recognized by the mighty eschatological works of Jesus.' Thus, according to Strecker's reasoning, Matthew's presentation of the *Bios* of Jesus, his proclamation and his relationship to God's prior revelation in the OT combine to set forth for the church 'the way of righteousness' (cf Matthew 21:32).¹⁸

In marked contrast to Strecker's view of the formula quotations, **Wilhelm Rothfuchs** (1969) maintained that *both* the fulfilment formulae (which were distinctly Matthean) *and* the quotations themselves were carefully selected, shaped and integrated into the context.¹⁹ As such, they are clearly expressive of Matthew's theological concern which is not to depict the life of Jesus as past historical event, but rather to testify to Jesus as the Messiah who fulfills God's revelatory and salvation-historical purpose and who as the risen Lord is present with the community (see Rothfuchs 1969:89-133). In the words of Senior (1997b:93) reflecting on Rothfuchs' 'strong proposal': 'Without question the introductory formulae were Matthean in both language and theology, serving Matthew's christology which viewed Jesus as the fulfilment of the Hebrew Scriptures. Likewise the quotations themselves were carefully selected and adapted to the context to illustrate this fundamental christology. Thus cumulatively the formula quotations were linked to a deep current of Matthean theology.'²⁰ By thus stressing the element of 'fulfilment' as basic to Matthew's use of the Old Testament (hence the term *Erfüllungszitate*) and by relating this fulfilment theme to Matthew's christology in particular, Rothfuchs was of course not making a

¹⁸ Strecker (1983:77-79) also refers to Matthew's *institutionalization* of traditional material, but the connection of this with Matthew's use of the Old Testament is found only in relation to evidence of a scribal tendency in the use of 'the quotation-source, which is influenced by the idea of fulfilment, and by the fact that these same elements play a not unimportant part in Matthew's redaction.'

¹⁹ See note 16 above. Rothfuchs (1969: 89) describes the relationship between quotation and context as follows: '*Das Verhältnis zwischen den Zitaten und ihrem Kontext ist durch eine gegenseitige Beeinflussung charakterisiert*'.

²⁰ See also Soares Prabhu (1976:159-61); Stanton (1992a:346).

novel proposal, whatever the particular distinctives of his methodology.²¹ But in the course of his study of Matthew's presentation of Jesus as the one in whose life as a whole God's promises are fulfilled, Rothfuchs identified an important question *viz* that of the *distribution* of the formula quotations within Matthew's gospel (Rothfuchs 1969:97-103).²²

The question about the distribution of the formula quotations is of course linked to the tendency of scholars to concentrate on the formula quotations as the clearest expression of Matthew's theological intention (see above). It also arises out of the claim that the function of the formula quotations in Matthew's gospel is to present the whole life of Jesus as the fulfilment of prophecy. If this is indeed the case, why are the formula quotations not distributed evenly throughout the whole gospel? Rothfuchs' fundamental contribution to this question was three-fold: First he noted the clear accumulation of the *Erfüllungszitate* in the so-called pre-history of Jesus (*Die Häufung der Erfüllungszitate in der Vorgeschichte* - 1969:98). Second, he noted a corresponding lack of fulfilment formulae in the Passion narrative.²³ Third, and perhaps most significant for our purposes, he noted that there was a concentration of Isaiah quotations in the '*Mittelstück des Evangeliums*', *viz* chapters 4-13. We will look at these point briefly in turn.

First, regarding the accumulation of the formula quotations in the infancy narrative, Rothfuchs

²¹ So e.g. Allen (1907:lxvi): 'As Messiah, He fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament'; McNiele (1915:9). '....in the early Church it was a leading conception, particularly marked in the 1st and 4th Gospels...that the events of Christ's life were divinely ordered for the express purpose of fulfilling the OT', *cf* Tasker (1946:41-42). See also Gundry (1967:189-234) and the comments of France (1989:167) and Davies & Allison (1997:577). The purpose of Rothfuchs' 'biblical theological investigation' of the formula quotations in Matthew's gospel was not only to 'determine their precise form-critical setting' (Soares Prabhu 1976:75, *cf* Rothfuchs 1969:17-20), but also to reflect on the bearing of the quotations on Matthew's theology (Rothfuchs 1969:110-133, *cf* Van Segbroeck 1970:120). The latter concern thus identified Rothfuchs with the then comparatively recent *Redaktionsgeschichtliche* approach (*cf* Rothfuchs 1969:16) of Bornkamm, Held etc (see Stanton 1983:1-18).

²² See the comments of Manfred Karmetzki in his review of Rothfuchs work (Theologische Literaturzeitung 95. Jahrgang 1970 Nr 8. 585-87.)

²³ Senior (1997b:94) points out that Rothfuchs 'suggested that in fact the formula quotations were grouped at the beginning of the gospel even more radically than the statistics suggested. The quotation that concluded the Judas story had probably already been attached to this story before Matthew included it in his passion account and appended the formulaic introduction. Likewise the citation of Isa 62,11 attached to the entrance into Jerusalem in 21,4-5 may also be traditional as suggested by its use in John 12,15'. (See Rothfuchs 1969:102). This kind of reasoning by Rothfuchs does however ignore the fact that 'Matthew's own views are reflected, not only in the changes he makes to his sources, but also in his choice of the tradition he incorporates' (Stanton 1992a:45-46).

proposed that whatever *historical-geographical* or *apologetic* or *polemical* tendencies these may evince (1969:99-100, cf Brown 1993:97-98), the primary reason for this accumulation is to demonstrate that it is *God alone* who is ‘at work’ in the story of the child Jesus and that this child, as yet inactive, is to be seen from the outset as the fulfilment of God’s plan (Rothfuchs 1969:101).²⁴ *Second*, as far as the absence of the formula quotations from the passion narrative is concerned, Rothfuchs (1969:102) points to the fact that the Synoptists contented themselves with general comments about Scriptural fulfilment. This was not because they did not see Jesus’ passion as a fulfilment of Scripture, but rather because this reality was well established within the early Christian proclamation.²⁵ The marked absence of formula quotations in Matthew’s account of the passion narrative makes this point in a particularly weighty fashion. Jesus’ entire passion is brought under the rubric of the fulfilment of prophecy by a single generalised saying: ‘τοῦτο δὲ ὅλον γέγονεν ἵνα πληρωθῶσιν αἱ γραφαὶ τῶν προφητῶν’ (Matthew 26:56). *Third*, Rothfuchs (1969:43, cf 144-47) observes that the prevalence of Isaiah quotations in chapters 4-13 of Matthew and the specific formulaic designation τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ Ἡσαΐου τοῦ προφήτου which occurs exclusively in 4:17; 8:17; 12:17 and 13:35²⁶ serve to link the Galilean ministry of Jesus with Isaiah’s prophecy in particular. This is because in this period of Jesus’ ministry the focus is in particular upon the ‘the lost house of Israel’, a situation which will change with the rejection of Jesus. This turning point in the salvation-historical dispensation occurs, as far as the structure

²⁴ ‘In der Kindheitsgeschichte ...ist Jesus noch nicht der Handelnde. Die Zitate machen also deutlich daß Gott selbst in der geschichte Jesu von Anfang an der eigentlich Handelnde ist’ (Karnetzki 1970:586, see note 22above). Cf also the review by R.Pesch *Biblische Zeitschrift* 1973 Nr 17. 112: ‘im Weg des Kindes Jesu geschieht Gottes Plan’.

²⁵ This is one of the factors which leads Rothfuchs to concur with those who trace the source of the formula quotations to the *kerygmatic* tradition of the early Church (see also Senior 1996:57-58).

²⁶ Note however the textual variant at this point. Soares Prabhu (1976:52) concurs with UBS/ Nestlé-Aland that the reference to Isaiah be excluded from 13:35 and that the latter be viewed as an example of the *Grundform* (cf Soares Prabhu 1976:47). Van Segbroeck (1972:122) correctly observes that the presence of the name in this text is a key issue for the establishment of Rothfuchs thesis. Cf also Senior (1997b:94 n 11): ‘...the citation in 13,35 is actually from Ps 78,2 yet there is good reason to believe that Matthew’s attribution of this citation to Isaiah (13,35) is original. Thereby the evangelist extends the name of Isaiah to Jesus’ employment of parables (as already in 13,14-15, a parallel to Mark where Isa 6,9 is quoted.’ Certainly from a text critical perspective it is easier to understand the exclusion of the reference to Isaiah given the source of the quotation than to explain why such a reference should later have been added.

of Matthew's gospel is concerned, at Matthew 13:35.²⁷

In his evaluation of the fortunes of the classic work of Stendahl (1968), **Frans van Segbroeck** (1972:107-130) turns his attention to what at that time were 'three recent works' viz the works of Gundry (1967), McConnell (1969) and Rothfuchs (1969). It is van Segbroeck's evaluation of Rothfuchs's work, and in particular his comments regarding the distribution of the formula quotations that interest us at the moment. Van Segbroeck makes two key points: First (:26), he points out (in agreement with an observation by Neirynk 1967), that the accumulation of the formula quotations in the first 13 chapters of Matthew's gospel is in fact entirely consistent with Matthew's own redactional practice. As we noted above, Matthew tends to handle his sources conservatively and this includes quotations from the Old Testament which his sources contain. But in the first 13 chapters, Matthew is at his most independent and creative. Thus it comes as no surprise that it is here in particular that the formula quotations, which van Segbroeck concurs with Rothfuchs are *redactional*, at least in their formulae and selection, are found most frequently. This view is shared by both Stanton (1992a:362) and Senior (1996:60, 1997b:94). Second (:127), van Segbroeck comments with respect to the specific presence and identification of the Isaiah quotations, that this is entirely appropriate within Matthew chapters 4-14 since, like Jesus himself in his ministry to Israel, Isaiah was particularly concerned about Israel's salvation (a point which Rothfuchs himself makes) and yet the prophet, like Jesus after him, experienced rejection by the very people to whom he came. This is also entirely consistent with the setting of Matthew's gospel and the dual challenge of mission and rejection which faced the Matthean community. With this additional emphasis on rejection, van Segbroeck is also able to supply further support for the claim that the formula quotations (especially in this case the use of Isaiah 6 in Matthew 13) have been carefully crafted into the narrative context.

We have already noted the contribution of **Graham Stanton** (1992a:346-63) with regard to the first two key questions including his valid warning against an over-emphasis on the formula

²⁷ Matthew's handling of the quotation from Isaiah in 13:35 is according to Rothfuchs not only clear evidence (*contra* Strecker) that Matthew has carefully integrated quotation and context, but is in fact a key turning point in Matthew's entire presentation of the life of Jesus. From this moment on the work of Jesus is focussed on the disciples, with the result that what was promised for Israel the nation is now fulfilled for Jesus' disciples, both in their own case and in the proclamation of the believing community, amongst whom the risen Lord is present, to the world (*cf* Matthew 28:20). See also van Segbroeck (1972:123-24).

quotations²⁸. His contribution to the discussion of the function and the purpose of the formula quotations is no less valuable. According to Stanton (:346), the formula quotations ‘are all theological ‘asides’ or comments by the evangelist’ which along with his other uses of Scripture, function ‘to underline some of his most prominent and distinctive theological concerns.’ While Stanton acknowledges that at least some of the quotations may have been taken over from another source, he affirms that the introductory formulae are undoubtedly the work of the evangelist. In this he concurs with Rothfuchs (1969) and Soares Prabhu (1976), augmenting their meticulous examination of the words and phrases of the formulae, with the observation that ‘two of the three elements of the formulae can be seen in Matthew’s redaction at 26.54,56 of Mark 14:14c’ where ‘as in numerous other passages, Matthew has taken a Marcan phrase and developed it considerably’ (:359). He also argues that in two cases (viz 1:23 and 2:6) Matthew, who has generally added the formula quotations ‘to earlier traditions to which he had access’, has ‘adapted the wording of the quotation to fits its context in his infancy narratives’ (:360). In addition to this, he notes that in 1:23 and 2:15 the quotation itself has caused Matthew to amend the *Grundform* of his fulfilment formulae. The word υἱόν appears in both quotations and in each, but nowhere else in the gospel, the phrase ὑπὸ κυρίου has been added by Matthew. ‘This’, says Stanton, ‘is hardly a coincidence. Matthew intends to make a Christological point: Jesus is the Son of God’ (:361). Here, as elsewhere (:361-62), the formula quotations stand primarily in service of Matthew’s Christology.²⁹

As far as the distribution of the formula quotations is concerned, Stanton is more cautious in his conclusions. He affirms as do others that ‘nearly all the evangelist’s distinctive themes are found in chapters 1 and 2: the infancy narratives form a theological prologue to the gospel as a whole’ (:360). But, unlike Howell (1990:187), he does not see this as a dominant reason for the accumulation of formula quotations in these early chapters. ‘There is’, says Stanton (:359), ‘no

²⁸ Senior (1997b:95) observes that despite Stanton’s warning to this effect, the ‘lure of the formula quotations continues to hold sway in his own work, commanding the major part of his focus.’ However a closer perusal of Stanton’s work (especially pages 355-357) shows that this criticism is not entirely justified and may stem more from Senior’s own distinctive methodology than from Stanton’s inconsistency.

²⁹ In the case of 4:15-16, Stanton draws attention to the fact in addition to describing Jesus as the φῶς for Γαλιλαία Matthew will also shortly describe Jesus’ disciples as τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου. This, says Stanton (1992a:362), ‘is also related to Matthew’s concerns’ for here as elsewhere ‘the evangelist draws attention to the ways in which the disciples (and Christians in his own day) continue the ministry of Jesus.’

obvious answer', although he notes the suggestion that perhaps 'the evangelist was well aware that whereas Mark had already set the passion narratives against the backdrop of Scripture', but that 'traditions concerning the birth and infancy of Jesus had not yet been interpreted in this way' (:359, *cf* Brown 1993:97-99). Having argued on the basis of three points that 'the formula quotations have been added by the evangelist himself to earlier traditions to which he had access' (:360),³⁰ Stanton concludes that 'it seems likely that Matthew himself was the first to see their relevance in a Christian setting.' Regarding the Isaiah quotations in Matthew 4-13, Stanton observes that the distribution 'may be co-incidental' (:363). Nevertheless, he notes van Segbroeck's explanation for this phenomena (see above) as possible.

For Stanton then, 'Matthew's use of the Old Testament is closely related to his distinctive theological themes. Although the evangelist usually retains with little modification OT quotations in his main sources Mark and Q, some have been carefully adapted in line with his own concerns. But his most distinctive contribution is his use of ten OT passages with their carefully phrased introductions [which] all comment on the story of Jesus and draw out its deeper significance by stressing that all its main features are in fulfilment of Scripture. While some of his quotations may have been used by earlier Christians, Matthew himself is almost certainly responsible for the choice and adaptation of many of them' (1992a:363, *cf* Stanton 1985:1930-1934).

Donald Senior (1997b:89-115) in an essay which updates his earlier work on 'Matthew's use of the Old Testament' (1996:51-61), is in a position both to review his earlier comments and, in the light of Stanton's essay and subsequent work,³¹ to further contribute to the subject. Although he concurs with some of the major points put forward by Stanton such as 'the christological intent of the formula quotations' (1997b:98, *cf* Stanton 1992a:361-63), Senior is not always persuaded by Stanton's redaction critical conclusions (see Senior 1997b:98 note 19) or impressed

³⁰ The three factors that according to Stanton 'strongly suggest' that this is the case are '(i) Matt 1:18-2:23 can be read without the formula quotations - indeed the story line flows rather better !... (ii) Five of the six formula quotations outside the infancy narratives have clearly been added to Marcan traditions by the evangelist....and (iii) The OT passages referred to are not quoted elsewhere in the NT.' Senior (1997b:97) does not find these reasons 'particularly decisive'.

³¹ Senior is in a position not only to draw on the work of two major new commentaries in English (*viz* those of Luz and the monumental work of Davies & Allison), but also to consult the increasing number of works written from a narrative, rhetorical and socio-historical perspective such as the work of Howell (1990), Overman (1990), Saldarini (1994).

at his lack of interaction with work from a more literary critical perspective,³² especially that of **David Howell** (1990:184-190) whose work has helped to shape some of Senior's own thinking.

As this subtitle to his monograph suggests,³³ Howell is interested in the 'rhetorical function in the narrative' which the Old Testament quotations play in Matthew's gospel. He applies the category of 'generalization commentary'³⁴ to the formula quotations in particular and describes them as 'generalizations' which have an 'important rhetorical function ...in establishing the reliability and authority of both the narrator and of Jesus' (1990:185-86). Howell observes that 'although the Old Testament quotations are concentrated in the opening chapters of the Gospel, they still highlight almost every aspect of Jesus and his ministry' (:186, cf Luz 1989:162). Furthermore, says Howell, the 'Old Testament and its authority as the word of God (1.22; 2.15) exist independently of the narrative world of the Gospel. When Matthew appeals to prophecies which lie outside of his Gospel's narrative world (prophecies whose authority is accepted by the implied reader), and when he shows how the events in Jesus' life which he is narrating fulfilled the Old Testament Messianic hopes, he thereby gives his narrative plausibility and reinforces the truthfulness of his claims about who Jesus is. Since the Old Testament formula quotations are cited by the narrator, his trustworthiness is also established for the implied reader' (1990:186). In the words of Senior (1997b:100), 'for Howell the rhetorical function of the formula quotations supports both Matthew's christology and reinforces the authority of the gospel itself.'

According to Howell (1990:187 ff) therefore, the fulfilment quotations 'function rhetorically to tell the implied reader the correct way to read the narrative.' This they do by focussing on Jesus who 'is a crucial part' of 'the history of Israel as God's chosen people...and of the fulfilment of

³² Senior complains concerning Stanton's work that 'the influx of literary critical studies do not figure prominently in his assessment.' (1997b:91) The reason for this is in my opinion a fairly straightforward one. While it is true that Stanton remains committed to redaction critical study of the gospels, his introductory essays in his 1992a work make it clear that he is by no means ignorant or dismissive of literary critical work. What the bibliography of the chapter on Matthew's use of the Old Testament reflects however is that this essay has been adopted into the present work very much in the form in which it first appeared in the early 1980's.

³³ *A Study of the Narrative Rhetoric of the First Gospel.*

³⁴ Howell (1990:181-184) quotes Chatman (1978:228) in defining 'generalization' as 'commentary which makes reference outward from the fictional to the real world, either to 'universal truths' or actual historical facts. According to him a 'primary function of both factual and rhetorical generalization is to fulfill the need for verisimilitude.' (Cf Chatman 1978:228, 244).

God's promises to his people', and by bestowing upon Jesus 'the badge of reliability as well as confirming the trustworthiness of the narrator.' Thus the accumulation of Old Testament quotations (including fulfilment quotations) in the birth and infancy narratives is part of the way, along with the superscription and genealogy, in which 'the implied reader's initial understanding of Jesus' identity as the Son of God and the promised Messiah' is established and 'the stage is set for reading the rest of the story.' Similarly, by 'focussing on Jesus who is the reliable interpreter of God's will, the Old Testament fulfilment quotations underline the gravity of the choice whether to accept or reject Jesus and his teaching.' In this, together with other Old Testament quotations, they not only confront the implied reader with the reality of the choices made by Israel as a nation (e.g. 13:14-15; 15:7-9; 21:42 and of course the formula quotations in 4:14-16; 8:17; 12:17-21; 13:35), but also serve to place the acceptance / rejection theme at the very heart of Matthew's own ideological point of view. This latter point is underlined by noting with Howell (1990:188-89) that in 26:54-56, 'there is a clear convergence between Jesus and the narrator.' In the words of Senior, to whose survey we now return, 'Jesus' statement about fulfilment of the prophets at the moment of his arrest not only extends scriptural fulfilment and the theme of rejection to the passion narrative, but also is the only time in the gospel in which the character Jesus expresses the same words the narrator has been stating in the fulfilment quotations' (1997b:100-101).

Senior's own conclusions regarding the scholarly investigation of the formula quotations are listed in 7 summary points (see :102-103). The first five of these are fairly standard, but points 6 & 7 enable us to add to what has been said thus far.

First, Senior (1997b:103) points to more recent discussions regarding 'the social context of the gospel and the relationship of Matthew's community to formative Judaism.' These, he says, 'have provided further rationale for the particular shape and emphasis in Matthew's appeal to the Old Testament.' Senior cites the work of *inter alia* Overman (1990) and Luz (1995),³⁵ two scholars who while reaching opposing conclusions regarding Matthew's community and its relationship to Judaism, nevertheless concur with regard to the function of Matthew's fulfilment

³⁵ See also Stanton (1992a:113-68) and Saldarini (1994). A recent work by Carter (2000) raises the key issue of the 'marginality' of the Matthean community, but does not deal with the role of the Old Testament quotations in addressing this 'life on the margins' in any significant way.

theology and his use of the Old Testament. For Overman, who sees Matthew's community as still within Judaism, Matthew's '....use of the notion of fulfilment, as it is expressed in the fulfilment citations, is an attempt by Matthew to lend antiquity and authority to the beliefs and life of his community. The use of Scripture and the interpretation of certain prophecies in the light of the history of Jesus of Nazareth make the claim, in the face of the contention and competition from the Jewish leadership in Matthew's setting, that the beliefs and actions of his community are neither spurious, new, nor innovative. Rather, the figure of Jesus and therefore the beliefs of the Matthean community about Jesus are the fulfilment of God's foreordained plan. The life of the Matthean community is in continuity with the Scripture, promises, and traditions of the history of Israel' (1990:78). The citations thus fulfil the task of legitimisation for Matthew's community, rather as the *peshet* interpretation of Habakkuk did for the Qumran community. Ulrich Luz (1995:40), on the other hand, maintains that 'Matthew lived at a time when the bonds connecting his community with Israel's synagogues had been severed.' Yet he can then continue in terms very like those of Overman, that Matthew's community 'did not view itself as a new 'Christian' congregation, but as the true core of the nation of Israel, summoned by Jesus to God. This led him to reformulate, in a programmatic spirit, Mark's incidental Christian notion of the fulfilment of Scripture. Given the rift between those parts of Israel that believed in Jesus and those that did not, the Scripture could only become an object of contention. The Christian communities raised claims to the legacy of Israel just as did the synagogues of the Pharisees.' In the words of Riches (1996:64), who himself remains agnostic regarding the precise social location of Matthew's community, '....the point is that both Judaism and Matthew's community orientate themselves by 'Scripture' and will continue to struggle over the interpretation of Scripture whatever their relationship.' Senior thus concludes: 'Therefore Matthew's ecclesiology as well as his christology are significant motivations for his stress on Old Testament fulfillment' (1997b:103).

Second, although Senior (1997b:103) acknowledges that the various suggestions that have been put forward to explain 'the profusion of quotations in the opening chapters of the gospel' and the 'rationale for the four Isaiah quotations in chapters 4-13' are 'all helpful and offer partial explanations', he does not find them completely satisfying. Two questions remain in his opinion. First, the fact that 'the two quotations in 21,4-5 and 27,9-10 appear orphaned in Matthew's scheme' needs to be clarified in a way which does not merely discount them as Rothfuchs does,

for example. In his opinion their existence and clear Matthean character casts doubt on the adequacy of van Segbroeck's appeal to Matthew's 'emphatic' redactional activity in the first thirteen chapters of the gospel as the primary reason for the accumulation of the formula quotations in that section. Second there is some doubt about whether Matthew 13:35 is *as major* a turning point as Rothfuchs and van Segbroeck make it, since chapter 13 'is hardly the end of Jesus' public ministry to Israel nor the finale of the motif of rejection.' This in turn suggests a different rationale for the presence of the Isaiah quotations in chapters 4 - 13.

3. Exile, Restoration and Matthew's Use of the Old Testament

Senior (1997b:103-104) begins to formulate his own study of Matthew's use of the Old Testament with a plea that Stanton's warning about the 'tendency to neglect the other features of Matthew's appeal to the Old Testament' is worth taking seriously. He reminds us of the point we noted at the outset, that, 'even if one concentrates only on direct quotations and evident allusions, Matthew's use of the Old Testament is a substantial feature of his gospel. But then follows what, in my opinion, is a *key observation*, viz that **'the formula quotations in fact make explicit a theological perspective that emerges in several ways throughout the gospel.'** That this is indeed the case and just what that theological perspective is, is what Senior then sets out to show by means of three categories of investigation, each of which is applied first, as he puts it (1997b:104), 'in a more generic fashion' to the gospel as a whole and then, in more detailed fashion, to the passion narrative in particular. These three categories of investigation are (1) Programmatic Statements, (2) Direct Quotations and Allusions other than formula quotations and (3) Incidents or entire Episodes within the narrative that appear to be inspired in whole or part by Old Testament passages, events or personages. In what follows we will briefly survey and critically interact with Senior's comments in each of these categories, using them as a foil against which to test further the thesis that the theme of exile and restoration is indeed 'crucial for Matthew' (*cf* Wright 1992:385-86).

3.1 Programmatic Statements.

First, taking his cue from the emphasis on fulfilment in the formula quotations, Senior

(1997b:105, 108-109) draws attention to what he calls ‘programmatic statements’ in which the word πληρώ occurs,³⁶ viz 3:15 and 5:17 (πληρωσαι) and 26:54 and 26:56 (πληρωθωσιν).

3.1.1 All Righteousness (Matt 3:15)

First then, with respect to Matthew 3:15, Senior (1997b:105) points out that ‘the use of *πᾶσαν δικαιοσύνην* gives the statement a strong ethical emphasis and therefore is applicable to Jesus’ own faithfulness to the will of God’ while the ‘connotation of Matthew’s key word *πληρωσαι* and its link to the notion of *πᾶσαν δικαιοσύνην* also suggest to the reader that Jesus’ obedience is a fulfilment of the justice asked of Israel in the scriptures.’ Both of these observations are valid and are consistent with what we described in our discussion of the plot of Matthew’s gospel as Matthew’s presentation of Jesus as the *True Israelite*, God’s beloved Son (3:13 - 4:11 cf 2:15). But, as we noted briefly in that discussion, far more can be said. Justice is not only ‘asked of Israel in the scriptures’, it is also promised in the scriptures, and in particular in the book of Isaiah, as the characteristic of God’s Spirit-anointed Servant and as that much needed reality which the LORD’s Righteous Servant will bring. God’s charge against ‘Judah and Jerusalem’ (Isaiah 1:1) was that ‘the faithful city’ had become ‘a harlot’, that the city which once had been full of ‘justice and righteousness’ was now full of ‘murderers, rebels and thieves’. But this state of affairs would not be allowed to continue. The LORD himself declared (Isaiah 1:24 ff) that he would ‘purge away’ the ‘dross’ of Judah and Jerusalem and remove their impurities. The result of this restorative discipline will be that Jerusalem would be called ‘the City of Righteousness, the Faithful City’ (עִיר הַצְדִּיק קְרִיָה נְאֻמָּה - Isaiah 1:26). But this restoration will also have implications for the world at large, for Isaiah 2:1-5 with all its present appeal for repentance in Judah (2:5), envisages the day when within this restored Jerusalem, the LORD’s temple will once

³⁶ A brief survey of Matthew’s use of *πληρώ* shows that it is used in two ways by Matthew with regard to his ‘fulfilment theology’. It is *either* used in a standard form in the fulfilment formulae (either *πληρωθῇ* or *ἐπληρώθη* with *ἵνα* or *τότε* respectively) *or* it is used in the four ‘programmatic statements’ which Senior identifies, two of which occur in the period of Galilean ministry viz 3:15 & 5:17 (*πληρωσαι*) and two of which occur in the passion narrative viz 26:54 & 26:56 (*πληρωθωσιν*). The latter of these is particularly significant because, as Howell (1990:188-89) points out, ‘only here in the entire narrative does Jesus express on the phraseological plane with the same words what the narrator has been stating throughout the Gospel in the fulfilment quotations: the events of Jesus’ life fulfill the Old Testament scriptures.’ For the importance of ‘fulfilment’ in Matthew’s theology see *inter alia* Frankemölle (1974:388 - *Dieses Wort* [i.e. *πληροῦν*] *bezeichnet in kürzester und prägnantester Weise die theologische Grundidee des Mt*), France (1989:166-67).

again be the centre of world blessing, *from which* the LORD's righteous law will flow like life-giving streams (*cf* Genesis 2:8-14; Psalm 46) and *to which* the nations will stream in willing submission to that law.

By the time the reader gets to Isaiah 39:1-8, it is clear that this transformation will be brought about only through the furnace of the exile (see 3:1 - 4:1 *cf* Webb 1996:48-49; 39:6-7).³⁷ It is by the righteous judgement of exile that Zion will be redeemed (Isaiah 1:27). This is the backdrop against which chapters 40-66 are set and it is against this backdrop of inevitable exile that the 'good news' of comfort in 40:1-11 must be understood.³⁸ It is also against this backdrop that we are to understand the ministry of the Servant of the LORD. In Isaiah 42:1-9, the Servant is 'called in righteousness' (אֲנִי יְהוָה קָרָאתִיךָ בְּצֶדֶק) (Isaiah 42:6 *cf* 41:2) by one who describes himself as 'God the LORD' (הָאֵל יְהוָה). The task of this Servant is 'to bring forth justice' (יֹצִיא מִשְׁפָּט) for the nations (לְגוֹיִם), a task that will be accomplished *by the Spirit* (42:1), *in faithfulness* (42:3), *with meekness* (42:2-3) and *with perseverance* (42:4). Thus the Servant is the one *through whom* God's righteous purposes will be achieved. This notion of agency is of course inherent in God's description of the servant as 'my servant...my chosen one....' (Isaiah 42:1 NIV). But it is made even more explicit in the following clause. Two statements are made, *viz* 'I will put my Spirit on him' and 'he will bring justice to the nations'. Although neither the MT or the LXX has the NIV's 'and' linking these two clauses together, there is in fact a very close link implied (see Beuken 1972:1-30, Baltzer 2001:126-28). The servant can be identified as *God's* servant achieving *God's* purposes (righteousness on the earth) because he is empowered by *God's* Spirit. Thus the work of the servant can be spoken about in

³⁷ Isaiah 39:1-8 chronologically precedes the narrative in 36:1-38:22, but serves within the literary structure of the book as a fulcrum around which attention is diverted from the period of Assyrian onslaught to that of the Babylonian exile (*cf* Webb 1996:30-37). Isaiah 1:1-9 clearly has in view the siege of Jerusalem under Sennacherib. Isaiah 36:1-37:38 speaks again of that siege and the divine deliverance that Judah experienced. Thus these two sections provide what we might describe as a *historical inclusio* which holds this section together. But despite Hezekiah's prayer and the divine deliverance, the fundamental problem in Judah was not addressed and the exile thus became inevitable. This is the point of Isaiah's declaration in 39:1-8.

³⁸ The debate regarding the dating and authorship of Isaiah 40-55 & 56-66 is well documented and need not be rehearsed here. My own personal opinion is that in keeping with the dominant picture of God in Isaiah 40 ff as the God who controls and is thus able to fore-tell the future (e.g. Isaiah 41:21-24), it seems deeply ironical to argue that Isaiah 40-66 could only have originated 'after the event' so to speak. But whatever one's views on the question of date and authorship, it is clear from the text itself that the setting of Isaiah 40-66 is the Babylonian exile.

terms of God's work. This was certainly so in the case of the exodus where *both* the LORD *and* Moses are said to bring Israel out of bondage (*cf* Exodus 3:1-10, Exodus 15). And it is so in the *new exodus* described in Isaiah 42:1 - 43:21 where the servant's work is juxtaposed with Yahweh's own saving activity. As in the exodus, Yahweh will once more overthrow the enemies of his people and will lead them to the place of his dwelling with a *new song* on their lips.³⁹ And there he will rule over them and over all the earth with justice.

My contention is that it is this *hope of restoration* which is evoked by the juxtaposition of Isaiah 42 and Psalm 2 in the divine declaration in Matthew 3:17.⁴⁰ Here we are presented with Jesus, God's son and loyal servant, about to be commissioned for his task of establishing God's just rule upon the earth and among the nations. The time of restoration has begun, the light is beginning to dawn (Isaiah 42:6-7, *cf* Isaiah 9:1-2; Matthew 4:14-16), the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Matthew 3:2; 4:17, *cf* Isaiah 40:10-11; 43:15). What is *symbolised* in the baptism, is *actualised* in the descent of the Spirit and *interpreted* in the divine declaration. Jesus is King of God's kingdom and his goal is to bring all righteousness to its fulfilment. In keeping with the formula quotations, Jesus' statement πληρῶσαι πάντας δικαιοσύνην does thus function analeptically to *invoke* the 'promise of righteousness' from the Old Testament in general and from Isaiah in particular. But it does more. It also functions proleptically to *anticipate* 'the promise of righteousness' in the future when through the agency of his disciples, Jesus to whom all cosmic authority has been entrusted by God, will bring the nations into willing submission to his righteous rule (Matthew 28:18-20).

³⁹ Webb (1996:173) commenting on Isaiah 42:10 observes that 'this *new song* anticipates the song of the saints in heaven' (*cf* Revelation 5:9). But it is surely also correct to say that this 'new song' recalls the 'old song', the 'song of Moses and Israel' sung upon the banks of the Sea of Reeds after witnessing the divine deliverance (Exodus 15). The image of Yahweh as a *warrior* who triumphs over his enemies (Isaiah 42:13) and a *shepherd* who leads his people (Isaiah 42:16) are the two classic images of the exodus and conquest (see Exodus 15:1-15).

⁴⁰ *Cf* Matthew 12:17-21. Luz (1989:180) states regarding Matt 3:17 that 'the choice of the third person has the effect that the heavenly voice more so than in Mark corresponds to the wording of Isaiah, 42:1. But the completely different wording of the formula quotation in 12:18 shows that Matthew did not want to quote Isa. 42:1, but the heavenly voice of Mark 1:11. However he has adapted the formula quotation of 12:18a to the heavenly voice and thus related Isa. 42:1 - with v. 1b, which is important to the story of the baptism - perhaps for the first time to the baptism of Jesus.'

3.1.2 *The Law and the Prophets (Matthew 5:17)*

Second, as far as Matthew 5:17 is concerned⁴¹, Senior (1997b: 105) has two valuable observations to make. First, he observes that ‘this statement of Jesus affirms that his teaching is a fulfilment of the Old Testament viewed in its entirety, that is, ‘the law and the prophets’ - a traditional designation for the scriptures.’ Strictly speaking, of course, the phrase used in 5:17 is ‘the law *or* the prophets’, but the presence of the disjunctive *ἢ* rather than the *καί* which occurs elsewhere when the phrase is used in Matthew (7:12; 11:13; 22:40) only serves to strengthen the inclusiveness of Jesus’ claim, an inclusiveness underlined in the reference in 5:18 to *ὅσα ἐν ἡμῖν κεραία* which will not pass from the Law until everything is established.⁴² Whatever else one makes of the detail of this phrase in 5:18, Senior’s point is well made; Jesus has come to fulfill the Old Testament in its *entirety*. Secondly, Senior points out that ‘the Sermon on the Mount of chapters 5-7 is not simply one in a series of discourses but lays the foundation for all of Jesus’ teaching in the remainder of the gospel, affirming Jesus’ authority as a teacher and, equally important for Matthew, affirming that all his teaching of the law is both in continuity with the scriptures and brings them to fulfilment’ (1997b:105). And here there are two points to which we must give attention.

Firstly, we need to note the emphasis in Senior’s comment not only upon Jesus’ teaching, important though that is, but upon the person of *Jesus the Teacher* (cf Davies & Allison 1988: 486 note 11). The distinction is perhaps a subtle one, but it is important for our understanding of the meaning of 5:17-20. Thus fulfilment is described in 5:17 in personal terms which are almost identical with descriptions of Jesus’ mission elsewhere in Matthew’s gospel i.e. οὐκ + ἡλθον + inf + ἀλλὰ + inf (cf 9:13; 20:28). We can therefore say on the basis of 5:17 and in harmony with 4:17 that Jesus’ preaching, as exemplified in the Sermon of the Mount is a key

⁴¹ Jesus’ statement in Matthew 5:17 has been the subject of extensive research and debate, not only in connection with so-called Moses typology in Matthew’s gospel but more particularly in relation to ‘Matthew’s attitude to the law’. The issue has been discussed not only in commentaries and journal articles, but in a number of monographs. Stanton (1985:1934-1937) and Senior (1996:62-73) give brief summaries and helpful, if not exhaustive bibliographies.

⁴² The presence of the disjunctive *ἢ* rather than the *καί* may well be due as Davies & Allison (1988:484 *contra* Banks 1974:228) claim to the ‘negative form of the sentence’, but it may simply be due to flexibility in usage. Certainly as the reversed order οἱ προφηταὶ καὶ ὁ νόμος in 11:13 suggests it is unlikely that Matthew was rigid in his use of this phrase to designate the Scriptures.

component of his mission and therefore of his priorities.⁴³ Furthermore we note that throughout the sermon⁴⁴ Jesus repeatedly uses the emphatic ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν which I take it is what characterised Jesus in the eyes of his hearers as αὐτοὺς ἐξουσίαν ἔχων in marked contrast to οἱ γραμματεῖς αὐτῶν (7:29). And we note finally that it is Jesus' *personal authority* which is in view in the extraordinary conclusion to the sermon when Jesus, as in 5:1-16, claims the right to determine who will and who will not enter the kingdom of heaven and makes a relationship with himself the key factor for such entrance (7:23). It is little wonder then that in 7:28-29, the crowds were 'amazed' not only at his teaching, but at the one who taught in this way .

Secondly, we need to reflect further upon the meaning of the key term πληρώω (see Carson 1984:142; Davies & Allison 1988:485). What does it mean for Jesus to 'fulfill' the 'law or the prophets' i.e the Old Testament scriptures? The first thing we can say is that in Jesus' statement a marked contrast is drawn between 'to fulfil' (πληρῶσαι) and 'to abolish' (καταλῦσαι). This is clear from the emphatic position of Μὴ and οὐκ in each of the clauses as well as the repetition of the strong adversative ἀλλὰ. We can therefore say, in agreement with Senior, that 'to fulfill the law and the prophets' means at the very least to be in clear *continuity* with the law and the prophets. But *continuity* is not the only idea contained within Jesus' words, for there is within the word πληρώω as used in Matthew's gospel also the idea of something being brought to its appointed goal, as is suggested by the phrase ἕως ἃν πάντα γένηται in 5:18, a verse which according to Luz (1989:265) serves to make the meaning of vs 17 'more precise.' And it is precisely this aspect of Jesus' claim that has been difficult for commentators to explain.

Some commentators, noting the statement in 11:13 that 'all the prophets and the law prophesy' (πάντες γὰρ οἱ προφῆται καὶ ὁ νόμος ἕως Ἰωάννου ἐπροφήτευσαν), put the emphasis on this

⁴³ From the redactional critical perspective it is striking to note that Matthew inserts the Sermon of the Mount at a point in his narrative where Mark merely notes the fact of Jesus' authoritative teaching but then, unlike Matthew, records Jesus' description of his mission in terms of his preaching priority (Mark 1:35-38).

⁴⁴ The phrases τὸν νόμον ἢ τοὺς προφῆτας (5:17) and ὁ νόμος καὶ οἱ προφῆται form an *inclusio* circumscribing the body of the sermon. 5:1-16 and 7:13-27 and are its introduction and conclusion respectively. Matthew's customary summary in 7:28-29 acts as a bridge between the discourse and the ensuing narrative.

prophetic dimension of the scriptures and see fulfilment in broad terms.⁴⁵ Don Carson thus says concerning the interpretation of 5:17-20 that ‘the best interpretation of these difficult verses says that Jesus fulfills the Law and the Prophets in that they point to him, and he is their fulfilment.... Therefore we give *plēroō* ...exactly the same meaning as in the formula quotations, which in the prologue...have already laid great stress on the prophetic nature of the OT and the way it points to Jesus’ (1984:143-44).⁴⁶ And there is certainly truth in this general assertion, for, as we noted earlier, whatever else 5:17-20 is saying it is at least saying that Jesus is the one to whom the Old Testament in its entirety points. But true though this is, it is, in my opinion, too general, for as we have seen the emphasis in the sermon is on Jesus the authoritative teacher, so that we are left with the question: *How does Jesus the authoritative teacher fulfil the Law and the Prophets?*

Other commentators such as Luz (1989:255-267) (*cf* Dumbrell 1994:168) while not denying the prophetic component, place the emphasis within 5:17-19 on Jesus’ relationship to the Torah. The focus is then on how Jesus fulfills the Law (and the re-enforcement of the Law as found in the prophetic writings). After a comprehensive study of both *καταλύω* and *πληρώω* Luz (1989:260-65) concludes that Matthew’s focus is primarily on the *praxis* of Jesus. But in my opinion, nothing in the entire sermon which, in terms of *praxis*, focuses on the disciples’ conduct if anything, points in this direction. Indeed, the summary statement in 7:28-29 entirely contradicts such a view as does the discourse rather than narrative setting.⁴⁷ Dumbrell (1994:164-69), by contrast, while maintaining the focus upon the Torah, also maintains the focus on fulfilment and on Jesus’ role as a teacher and proposes a highly stimulating thesis to which we shall return

⁴⁵ The reversal of the order in 11:13 *viz* οἱ προφῆται καὶ ὁ νόμος rather than the expected ὁ νόμος καὶ οἱ προφῆται is, according to Davies & Allison (1991:256) ‘exceedingly unusual’. It leaves one in no doubt that the verb ἐπροφήτευσαν applies to ὁ νομός as well as οἱ προφῆται. For Matthew then whatever else the law does it also ‘prophesies’. Carson (1984:268) comments regarding 11:13 that the reversal of the order of law and prophets and the fact that according to Matthew the law ‘prophesies’ is ‘a powerful way of saying that the entire Old Testament has a prophetic function..’

⁴⁶ Of course for this view to be maintained, the phrase του νομου in 5:18 is taken to be a synonym for the ‘the law or the prophets’ in 5:17 and thus to refer to all scripture. So e.g. Morris (1992:107-110); Carson (1984:145).

⁴⁷ As Carson points out ‘the antithesis is not between ‘abolish’ and ‘keep’ but between ‘abolish’ and ‘fulfill’ (1984:143). See also Barth (1963:69): ‘The interpretation of A Schlatter and others, that πληρῶσαι = ‘do’, would agree well with ... linguistic usage; but the context does not speak of Jesus’ ‘doing’ of the law; in what follows it is rather the teaching of Jesus that is decisive.’ Barth interprets πληρώω as ‘establish’ arguing that this ‘complete establishing of the will of God, of the law by Jesus occurs here - corresponding with the context-by Jesus’ teaching as it is worked out in 5:20ff.’

below.

Davies and Allison (1988:486-87), represent something of a mediating position, claiming that the phrase τὸν νόμον ἢ τοὺς προφῆτας in 5:17 does refer to the scriptures as a whole, but that the τοῦ νόμου refers to the Torah alone, 5:18-19 thus representing a narrowing of the broader focus found in 5:17, a narrowing which is consistent both with the remainder of the sermon in the so-called *Antitheses* which follow immediately and with the evangelist's wider concern with the place of the Torah within the community for which he writes.⁴⁸ As far as the meaning of πληρόω is concerned, Davies and Allison opt for a combination of two ideas which are best expressed in their own words. First, they point out 'it is at once clear from 5.21-48 that Jesus proffers new demands' so that 'πληρόω must be consistent with a transcending of the Mosaic Law.' Second, they state that 'the verb almost certainly has prophetic content' a view that they base not only on the redactional ἢ τοὺς προφῆτας in 5:17, but also on the normal use of πληρόω in the fulfilment formulae, the abovementioned statement in 11:13 and their own particular interpretation of ἕως ἂν πάντα γένηται in 5:18 (1989:486-87). Thus they conclude that 'when Jesus declares 'I came...to fulfill', he means that his new teaching brings to realization that which the Torah anticipated or prophesied: its 'fulfiller' has come.' This combination of prophetic fulfilment and progression is in their opinion consistent with Matthew's presentation of Jesus as 'the eschatological prophet' (1988:487) - the Moses-like figure promised in Deuteronomy 18:15-20 whose *presence* and *new word* were both 'anticipated' by the Pentateuch itself thus making Matthew's application of the term *fulfill* with regard to both Torah and Prophets appropriate. And this of course once more suggests the *new Moses* typology which numerous scholars, not least Davies and Allison themselves have applied *inter alia* with regard to Matthew's birth narrative and Sermon on the Mount.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ The question of 'Matthew's attitude to the Law' has been one of keen interest from the earliest times as a brief perusal of Luz's now famous *history of influence* sections of his commentary (e.g. 1989:261-64) or his monograph on the same theme shows (Luz 1994). A brief history of more recent scholarly debate on the subject can be found in Stanton (1985:1934-937); Senior (1996:62-73).

⁴⁹ While Davies ([1964]1989) is more measured in his application of the Jesus - new Moses typology, Allison is adamant that, despite arguments to the contrary, the typology is clear and deliberate as far as Matthew's presentation of Jesus is concerned - a fact which the very title of his monograph - *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology* - makes clear (see Allison 1993). Cf. Hagner (1993:34).

Of course each of the views outlined above must come to terms with 5:18-19 and this is by no means a straightforward task. Thus those who see τὸν νόμον ἢ τοὺς προφήτας and τοῦ νόμου as synonyms referring to scripture as a whole, must explain Matthew's twin use of ἕως ἄν in 5:18 as well as the phrase τῶν ἐντολῶν τούτων τῶν ἐλαχίστων in 5:19. Davies and Allison (1988:496) state quite categorically that '....'the least of these commandments' adverts back to 5:18 and therefore to the commandments of the Mosaic Torah, not ahead to 5.21 ff and the words of Jesus, a position which seems to undermine taking τοῦ νόμου to refer to scripture. But it is syntactically possible that the phrase refers forward to 5:21 ff (cf e g Banks 1974:223) and indeed to *all* the commandments and instructions of Jesus which are about to follow not only in the remainder of the Sermon on the Mount but, if Senior's point about the Sermon as basic to and representative of all of Jesus' teaching in Matthew's gospel is correct, in the rest of the gospel as well. This view is certainly consistent both with Jesus' words of commendation in 7:24 for the wise man who not only *hears*, but *does* (ποιεῖ) *his* words (cf ποιήσῃ - 5:19) and his command to his disciples to, in turn, disciple the nations by baptising them and teaching them (διδάσκοντες αὐτοὺς) to keep (τηρεῖν) *all his* commands (πάντα ὅσα ἐνετειλάμην ὑμῖν) (cf 5:19 - ποιήσῃ καὶ διδάξῃ).

More difficult however, are the twin phrases ἕως ἄν παρέλθῃ ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ and ἕως ἄν πάντα γένηται which, according to Davies and Allison (1988:495), stand 'in synonymous parallelism' with the result that 'both refer to the outstanding consummation' or, to put it in other words, both are essentially *eschatological* in perspective. Such an interpretation, it would seem, poses severe difficulties for the view that τοῦ νόμου refers to the scriptures as a whole, for it seems to imply - contrary to what the Old Testament scriptures actually teach e g in Isaiah 40:8, a verse which could underlie Jesus' words in Matthew 24:35, that the word of God in the scriptures does not last εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα (Isaiah 40:8 - LXX). It seems highly unlikely that Jesus would have taught that the scriptures would pass away (παρέλθῃ) at the 'passing away' (παρέλθῃ) of the 'heaven and the earth', and then go on to say ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ παρελεύσεται, οἱ δὲ λόγοι μου οὐ μὴ παρέλθωσιν (Matthew 24:35). Such a view seems to teach precisely the *abolition* of the Law and the Prophets and not their *fulfilment*. But it should be noted that sometimes in Matthew the phrase ἕως ἄν does not in fact refer to the *cessation* of the thing spoken about as is the case, for example, with the *meekness* of Jesus the Servant in 12:20 or the

rule of Jesus in 22:44 or the *presence* of Jesus in 28:20. Thus one could argue that even if ἕως ἂν παρέλθῃ ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ and ἕως ἂν πάντα γένηται are synonymous and refer to the dissolution of the ‘present order of things’ (and this is by no means necessarily the case), then 5:18 would simply be synonymous with 23:35 - *both* the Law and the Prophets *and* the words of Jesus last forever and are thus on a par with each other.⁵⁰ In fact taking ἕως ἂν παρέλθῃ ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ and ἕως ἂν πάντα γένηται as synonymous and a reference to the consummation poses a difficulty for Davies and Allison’s view that τοῦ νόμου refers to the Torah alone. For why indeed should the Torah pass away at the consummation if it had been binding up until that time? Is it not much more likely, especially in the light of 5:17, that it is the coming of Jesus rather than ‘the consummation’ that will bring about changes with respect to the Torah? Rather surprisingly Davies and Allison do not address this dilemma at all in their discussion of 5:18.

Jesus the Royal Teacher of the New Covenant

Helpful though these comments may be in attempting to understand this or that aspect of the interpretation of 5:17-20 they do not in my opinion get to the heart of the matter. We are still faced with the question of how *Jesus the authoritative teacher* fulfills both the Law and the Prophets. And it is here that I want to return to the comments of Dumbrell (1994:164-169) as we consider Matthew 5:17-20 against the backdrop of Matthew’s narrative thus far and in the light of Jesus words in 5:3-16.

First, we note that Jesus’ words in 5:17-20 are preceded by a series of eight so-called *Beatitudes*,⁵¹ each of them beginning with the word μακάριοι which is translated as *blessed*. In the light of the LXX usage many commentators view the word as *happy* in the subjective sense

⁵⁰ Davies and Allison (1988:495) would disagree saying that the addition of ἕως ἂν πάντα γένηται ‘eliminates the possibility of interpreting ‘until heaven and earth pass away’ as being the rhetorical equivalent of never’ and maintaining that in 5:18 ‘a definite end to the law [is] set forth.’ The Lukan parallel (Luke 16:17) suggests that in Q, the saying did in fact have the force of ‘never’ but the Matthean addition ἕως ἂν πάντα γένηται does seem to imply some form of limitation or *telos*.

⁵¹ For a discussion of the Beatitudes in general and a summary of the scholarly debate concerning this much studied part of Matthew’s gospel see *inter alia* Davies & Allison (1988:431-42) and Stanton (1987:181-92).

of the word (so e.g. Davies & Allison (1988:431-34); Luz (1989:224-32)). But in my opinion the word μακάριος, as used in Matthew 5:3-12, should be understood in the light of Deuteronomy 33:29 where the word is used at the end of Moses' final blessing to describe the *privileged status* of the people of Israel (μακάριος σύ Ισραηλ τίς ὅμοιός σοι λαὸς σωζόμενος ὑπὸ κυρίου-LXX).⁵² Each of the beatitudes then goes on to list both a *characteristic* of the persons described as blessed (οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι....etc) and the *reason* why they should be so described (ὅτι....etc) and it is important that the characteristic and the reason be distinguished from one another. In the first and last beatitude in the formal list,⁵³ the reason given is the same so that the resultant *inclusio* circumscribes the beatitudes. The primary reason why the people described in the beatitudes are to be viewed as 'blessed' is because αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν. How are we to interpret this phrase? Davies and Allison understand the phrase as 'to the poor will be given the kingdom of heaven' and claim that 'the outcome of the last judgement is here proclaimed' (1988:445), this on the basis of viewing the *present tense* as proleptic 'expressing vividness and confidence'. While there may well be truth in this, one must however not overlook the significance of the transition from the *present tense* in 5:3 to the *future* in vss 4-9 and of the fundamental truth about the kingdom of heaven that both John and Jesus have proclaimed by this point in the narrative. With the coming of Jesus, the time of fulfilment has dawned and the kingdom is *at hand* (ἤγγικεν - 4:17). This *nearness* of the kingdom implies two things: it implies the possibility of entrance into the kingdom for those who will respond appropriately to Jesus and his kingdom demand (4:17-22, cf 5:20). It also implies the need for *patient endurance* until the complete accomplishment of God's kingdom purpose in and through Jesus (5:18, cf 6:10). And it is this time of consummation which is in view in the promises of 5:4-9.⁵⁴

It is now widely recognized that Isaiah 61 lies behind at least some of the Beatitudes though the extent of the connection and its role within the discussion regarding *tradition* and *redaction*

⁵² Wright (1992:387-88) compares the beatitudes (Matthew 5) and the *woes* (Matthew 23) which he takes to be related in chiasmic structure with the series of *blessings* and *curses* in Deuteronomy 27-28 arguing that Matthew is thus using his 5-fold discourse arrangement to recall the Pentateuch as *covenant*. However the word for blessed in Deuteronomy 28:3-6 is εὐλογημένος not μακάριος. Furthermore, as I shall argue later, the *woes* are more likely a recollection of the *woes* pronounced by Isaiah.

⁵³ On the structure of the Beatitudes and the inclusion or otherwise of 5:11-12 see *inter alia* Hagner (1993: 88-91); Davies & Allison (1988:429-31); Luz (1989:426).

⁵⁴ See Guelich (1976:415-434); Davies & Allison (1988:446); Luz (1989:235).

remains a disputed matter.⁵⁵ Certainly the connection of Isaiah 61 with the first three Beatitudes is fairly clear (*cf* Hagner 1993:91-93; Dumbrell 1994:165; Guelich 1976:427-28). The good news of the kingdom that Jesus came proclaiming (4:17, 11:5) was good news for the poor (πτωχοὶ- 5:3 *cf* Isaiah 61:1), the proclamation of *comfort* at last for the ‘mourning ones’ (οἱ πενθοῦντες - 5:4 *cf* Isaiah 61:2, 40:1) and of a restored inheritance in the land for the ‘meek’ (οἱ πραεῖς- 5:5 *cf* Isaiah 61:7).⁵⁶ But I want to suggest that the connection with Isaiah’s prophecy extends beyond the limits of Isaiah 61 and thus involves more than just the first three Beatitudes. In the fourth Beatitude, *satisfaction* is promised to those who ‘hunger and thirst for righteousness’. The meaning of the word δικαιοσύνη in the context of this Beatitude has been widely discussed, primarily with regard to its character of ‘eschatological gift’ and/or ‘ethical imperative’.⁵⁷ In my opinion however, the strongly Isaianic backdrop of the first three Beatitudes helps with the fourth as well. As we noted above, the ‘Servant King’ who is described in Isaiah 42:1-8 in terms closely resembling the language of Isaiah 61:1 ff (*cf* Isaiah 42:7) is the one whom God has called ‘in righteousness’ (vs 6) to ‘bring forth justice’ (vs 3) and to ‘establish justice on the earth’ (vs 4), and this not only for ‘the people’ (vs 6) but for the Gentiles as well. Just *how* this will be achieved is the subject of Isaiah 42 - 53, especially the final Servant Song in Isaiah 52:13-53:12. But *that* it will be achieved is the clear message of the characteristic invitation to sing extended to the *restored* Jerusalem in Isaiah 54:1-17. And from that restored Jerusalem, the city established ‘in righteousness’ (Isaiah 54:14) in terms which echo the eschatological vision of Isaiah 1:25-27 and 2:1-4 and the great gospel proclamation of Isaiah 40:1-11, goes an urgent invitation to all who hunger and thirst (Isaiah 55:1-2) with the promise that the LORD’s ‘salvation is close at hand’ and his ‘righteousness will soon be revealed’ (Isaiah 56:1-2). Is this not precisely a promise to

⁵⁵ See Davies & Allison (1988:437-39) and the bibliography listed there. While it may be true that ‘Matthew has not done much if anything to accentuate the connections between Isa 61.1-3 and Mt 5.3-12’ (Davies & Allison 1988:438) we must bear in mind as noted elsewhere that the statements that Matthew takes over from the tradition are still reflective of his own theological perspective. See also the discussion of Guelich (1976: 426-31).

⁵⁶ Although the phrase οἱ πραεῖς does not occur in Isaiah 61, it is closely related to οἱ πτωχοὶς (Isaiah 61:1) and may well have been brought into the Beatitudes on the basis of Psalm 37:11 as a further clarification of what Matthew meant by describing the poor as ‘poor in spirit’. It is striking to note that in the LXX of Isaiah 61:7 the inheritance of the land is said to take place ‘for a second time’ (ἐκ δευτέρως) thus strengthening the idea that the restoration from exile predicted by Isaiah is viewed as a Second Exodus and Conquest.

⁵⁷ Pryzbylski (1980:96-97); Guelich (1976:430); Morris (1992:98-99); Davies & Allison (1988:452-53).

those who hunger and thirst for righteousness that they will indeed be filled?⁵⁸ And, if so, does this Beatitude together with those discussed above, not reinforce the thesis that in the words of Matthew 5:3-6, Jesus is depicted as offering, in language drawn from the period of the exile (*ie* Isaiah 40-66) to a people who despite being back in the land are in effect still *in exile* (the poor, the mourners, the meek, those longing for justice), the promise of an end to that exile *viz* participation in the kingdom of heaven and the comfort, the inheritance and the satisfaction that such participation both does and will bring? In my opinion it clearly does.

What are the implications of this for our understanding of Jesus the teacher as the fulfiller of the Law and the Prophets? Put briefly, they are as follows. Jesus the Spirit anointed preacher who proclaims the end of the exile for those 'living in darkness and under the shadow of death' (Matthew 4:14-16) is none other than the Spirit-anointed King, God's Righteous Servant who will come to establish once more the righteous rule of God. And this he will do not only by bringing comfort to the mourning ones by saving them from their sins (Matthew 1:21), but by establishing *his righteous law* (*cf* Isaiah 42:4), a law which does not abolish God's law, but, as we shall see below, brings it to fulfilment by establishing it on the hearts of the citizens of God's kingdom. It is this *inner righteousness*, this *purity of heart* (Matthew 5:8), which is both *merciful* (5:7) and *peaceable* (5:9) which must characterise the citizens of God's kingdom, which will indeed exceed that outward righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees (5:20) and as with Jesus, evoke their hostility in the process.

Second, we note with Dumbrell (1994:165) that 'immediately following the Beatitudes Jesus uses two images to depict the eschatological community of those responding to the gospel - salt in verse 13 and light in verses 14-16.' What is more, we note that the emphatic Ὑμεῖς in these twin statements suggests that Jesus is drawing a contrast between the disciples and the 'Scribes and the Pharisees' who would doubtless have cast themselves in this role (Davies [1964]1989:249). With regards to the salt metaphor Dumbrell points out that 'underlying the use of the salt as an image in the Old Testament is the notion of durability rather than what we might

⁵⁸ See also the very striking language which forms the immediate backdrop to Isaiah 61. In Isaiah 58:1-12 true fasting, *ie* hungering and thirsting, is defined as 'loosing the chains of injustice', while in Isaiah 59:9-11 the light of justice or righteousness is said to be far away, something for which those who have been exiled because of their sins now earnestly seek, but cannot find.

expect - preservation' (1994:166) and that the image of salt is often used in conjunction with the language of covenant.⁵⁹ He thus concludes that 'not purity, but fidelity to an established arrangement lies behind the use of salt as a symbol in the Old Testament.' In Dumbrell's opinion then, Jesus' description of the disciples as 'the salt of the earth' is a reference to 'the enduring inward commitment specified in the first four Beatitudes' (1994:166). But in the light of my proposal that the first four Beatitudes should be seen firstly in objective descriptive terms (*viz* as descriptive of a state of exile), whatever subjective dimension might attach to them, I would suggest that Jesus' description is to be seen as *descriptive* of his disciples as the true covenant people of God and an *appeal* to them to remain 'salty', that is, loyal to the covenant obligations, which obligations are about to follow.

The metaphor of salt thus introduces the notion of *covenant loyalty* into Jesus' words to his hearers. The substance of Jesus' teaching in 5:17-7:12 then serves to explain more fully the exact nature of this covenant loyalty. It is loyalty to a covenant which remains in continuity with that which is recorded in the law and upheld by the prophets. This continuity is guaranteed because of the relationship of Jesus the Royal Teacher of the covenant to the 'Law and the Prophets' (*cf* 5:17), that is, to the Old Covenant.⁶⁰ But it is nonetheless loyalty to a *new* covenant, a covenant in which a new demand is made with respect to righteousness, a demand which is consistent with the coming of the kingdom of God (5:20) and the accomplishment of God's saving purposes (5:18) in the person and work of Jesus the Christ (*cf* 1:1, 4:17). According to Matthew 26:28 this new covenant is actually only initiated by Jesus' death,⁶¹ which death together with the

⁵⁹ See e.g. Leviticus 2:13 'the salt of the covenant'; Numbers 18:19 'an everlasting covenant of salt' and 2 Chronicles 13:5 'the LORD, the God of Israel, has given the kingship of Israel to David and his descendants forever by an everlasting covenant of salt'.

⁶⁰ If, as Dumbrell (1994:168) suggests, the phrase 'the Law or the Prophets' in Matthew 5:17 refers to '(1) law given by Moses and (2) law as interpreted in its widest prophetic sense', then it is quite appropriate to paraphrase 5:17 as a claim that Jesus fulfills the *Sinaitic Covenant*. This would not indeed involve an abolition of the Law or the Prophets, but as we noted earlier a bringing to fulfilment of that to which the Law and the Prophets testified. This coming to fulfilment (*cf* 5:18) began with John the Baptist (Matthew 11:13), took a decisive step with the beginning of Jesus' ministry and was finally consummated with Jesus' death (Matthew 26:28).

⁶¹ Note the emphatic position of τὸ αἷμά μου in relation to διαθήκης. Although, despite the evidence of a few manuscripts, Matthew following Mark does not have Luke's ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη, it is clear that the New Covenant is what is in view. The link of the word διαθήκης with the phrase εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν recalls the promise of Jeremiah 31:31-34 that the new covenant that God will make with Israel will involve the forgiveness of their sins as well as the Law on their hearts. The reference to 'knowing God' with respect to this covenant probably also underlies Jesus' statement with regard to the evildoers, 'away from me you evildoers, I never knew

resurrection I thus take to be in view in the phrase ἕως ἂν πάντα γένηται in 5:18. Thus the statement in 5:13 and what follows anticipates the establishment of that *new covenant* and the accomplishment of God's purposes (cf 5:18).⁶² The hallmark of this new covenant is a 'better righteousness' than that which characterised the 'Scribes and the Pharisees' (5:20).⁶³ This righteousness involved a heartfelt commitment to the spirit of God's law as well as to its letter, a right attitude as well as right action and a living relationship with God who sees in secret rather than a mere outward form of religion done for show.

As far as Jesus' description of his disciples as the 'light of the world' (Matthew 5:14) is concerned Dumbrell asserts that 'there can be little doubt as to what Jesus means', maintaining that 'by a further reference in the same verse to a city set on a hill....Jesus envisages an eschatological replacement whereby the small community he addresses has already assumed the function as the world centre that the Old Testament Zion was meant to be' (1994:166). Dumbrell maintains that 'behind the reference to light is Isaiah 2:2-4 in which the hillock of Zion becomes a towering world mountain bound up with the Sinaitic and Davidic traditions', but even though he argues that 'such eschatological contexts do not dictate precision' it is hard not to agree with Davies and Allison (1988:474-75) and Luz (1989:251-52) that it is difficult to see a specific reference to Jerusalem in Jesus' words. Indeed I would suggest that if there is any connection to the eschatological image in Isaiah 2:2-4 it should be related to Jesus himself who having ascended the mountain and sat down, becomes the source from which the Torah as a law of both heart and life (*ie* Torah in New Covenant terms) flows out to those who have come to learn from him (Isaiah 2:3). At this stage those who come are the *remnant of Israel* as described in the Beatitudes, to whom the kingdom of heaven is offered, and who in the words of Isaiah 2:5 are

you' (Matthew 7:23).

⁶² Thus *contra* Davies and Allison (1988:494-95) and in agreement with Meier (1976:30-35) and others, I take ἕως ἂν πάντα γένηται to be a reference to the death and resurrection of Jesus as the key turning point in Matthew's understanding of salvation history, and the time of accomplishment from which a new beginning flows for the new people of God. This is consistent with the death of Jesus as the point of plot resolution in Matthew's gospel.

⁶³ Although the phrase περισσεύση ὑμῶν ἡ δικαιοσύνη πλεον τῶν γραμματέων καὶ Φαρισαίων is essentially quantitative (Luz 1989:269-70), it is surely incorrect to think that Jesus is here engaging in the kind of debate about minutiae that he condemned among those who strained at gnats and swallowed camels. What is in view in the 'much more' is precisely the commitment to internal and secret as well as external and public righteousness that is described in Matthew 5:21-7:12.

being exhorted to ‘walk in the light of the LORD’, that is, to respond appropriately to the light of God which has dawned in the person and work of Jesus (*cf* Matthew 4:15-17; 7:13-27). But as they do so, they themselves become light, not only for the rest of the nation, but for the world (*cf* Isaiah 49:1-6; Matthew 5:14). Put in other words, as the darkness of exile is finally dispelled for those who hear and obey Jesus’ invitation and command, they become the messengers of that light of restoration (Isaiah 60:1-3; Matthew 5:16), first for the ‘the lost sheep of Israel’ (Matthew 10:6) and then for all the nations (Matthew 28:16-20). This they will achieve not only by ‘good deeds’ (τὰ καλὰ ἔργα- 5:16) done before men, that is, by living the kind of lifestyle that Jesus is about to outline in 5:20-7:12 so that people will be *drawn* to the light, but also by *going* to the nations to disciple them at Jesus’ command (Matthew 28:16-20).

3.1.3. *The Writings of the prophets (Matthew 26:56)*

The third so-called programmatic statement to which Senior directs attention is the statement in Matthew 26:56, a statement which, as we have noted in our discussion of Matthew’s plot, ‘is the only text in the gospel where the Matthean Jesus uses the phraseology of the formula quotations’ (1997b:105). The introductory phrase τοῦτο δὲ ὅλον γέγονεν is all encompassing and extends the notion of scriptural fulfilment to the entire event of Jesus’ rejection and death so that even though no explicit quotation is used, this aspect of the story of Jesus as much as the other events of his life and his teaching are to be seen as part and parcel of the accomplishment of God’s saving purposes, revealed in the Old Testament scriptures, but brought to fulfilment in the person and work of Jesus. Furthermore, the central place that the death of Jesus has within these saving purposes, is emphasised, from the point of view of rhetorical strategy, by the fact that it is at this point only in the narrative that ‘the testimony provided...by the narrator by means of the formula quotations’ is echoed by ‘the one who along with the divine voice..is the narrative’s most reliable and authoritative character, Jesus himself’ (Senior 1997b:106). Indeed the very generality of the phrase αἱ γραφαὶ τῶν προφητῶν suggests that for Matthew as much as for Luke, the rejection and death of Jesus the Christ lay at the heart of the prophetic testimony (*cf* Luke 24:25-26). But in what way is this rejection and death to be interpreted? The answer is provided by Matthew through a number of key explanatory statements made by the narrator and by Jesus himself in the final narrative block of the gospel.

The appointed time (Matthew 26:18)

First, we note that the passion narrative begins with three brief but very striking scenes, the first a prediction by Jesus of his impending death (26:1-2); the second the narrator's description of the assembly of the 'chief priests and the elders of the people' in the palace of the high priest with the express purpose of devising 'a sly way' of arresting and executing Jesus (26:3-5); and the third, the anointing of Jesus by the woman 'in preparation for burial'. In each scene Jesus' death is inevitable, but for very different reasons. The chief priests and the elders see the death of Jesus as the only way to be rid of him, yet they are unclear as to how or when. Indeed, 26:5 implies that they were not keen to risk a possible riot by having Jesus executed over the Passover. Jesus, by contrast, sees death by crucifixion as inevitable (ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου παραδίδοται εἰς τὸ σταυρωθῆναι), not because of circumstances or the hostility and scheming of the Jewish leaders, real though this is, but because he sees it as the central event in the divine plan for the salvation of God's people from their sins (*cf* Matthew 1:21). Jesus who came preaching the 'gospel of the kingdom' (4:23) sees at the heart of that gospel, the truth about his death.⁶⁴ For Jesus then the time of the Passover is 'the appointed time' (*cf* 26:18 - 'Ὁ καιρὸς μου ἐγγύς ἐστιν'), a time at which the Son of Man will go to his death not merely by the hand of a betrayer, but also 'just as it is written about him' (26:24), that is, in fulfilment of the Old Testament scriptures (*cf* 26:54).

The blood of the covenant (Matthew 26:28)

Second, as we noted above, Jesus' impending death is described in terms of a *new covenant*. This can be seen by noting a number of key things in Jesus' words. *First*, Jesus' statement τοῦτο γὰρ ἐστὶν τὸ αἷμά μου τῆς διαθήκης incorporates the traditional formula τὸ αἷμά τῆς διαθήκης found in Exodus 24:8 (*cf* Zechariah 9:11) and thus recalls the words of Moses and the inauguration of the covenant at Sinai (Davies & Allison 1997:475). *Second*, Jesus' inclusion of the possessive

⁶⁴ Stanton (1992a:10-18) argues persuasively that the phrase τοῦτο τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας could well be a reference to Matthew's work about Jesus. But that does not undermine the more general point, made by Mark that it is the message about Jesus, and in this particular context, the message about his death and burial, which lies at the heart of the gospel. Indeed, if one is to differ with Stanton regarding the referent of the demonstrative adjective, one could plausibly suggest that by adding τοῦτο Matthew is underlining the centrality of the death of Jesus within the gospel message. This would have been expected if his primary target readership was Jewish.

pronoun *μου* in the midst of this traditional formula marks a significant and, in my opinion, a deliberate change. It creates a contrast between Jesus' words and the words of Moses, so that the reader, while recalling the events at Sinai, is led to expect something new. Jesus' words are no mere re-affirmation of God's loyalty to his covenant as is the case in Zechariah 9:11. They are words of covenant inauguration, a covenant in which the blood of Jesus *ie* his death (Stibbs 1947:28-35; Morris 1965:112-28), supercedes the blood of the young bulls sacrificed by Moses 'as peace offerings to the LORD' (Exodus 24:5 NASB). *Third*, although the use of the phrase εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν in association with the word διαθήκης need not, by itself, imply an allusion to Jeremiah 31:31-34 (*cf* Davies & Allison 1997:473-74), its use in the abovementioned context of *covenant inauguration* suggests that such a link, made explicit in Luke 22:20, is present in Matthew 26:28 as well. The fact that Matthew does not follow Luke's ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη is in my opinion simply due to the fact that at this point Matthew is not following Q, but Mark and that here, as elsewhere, he is typically conservative in his handling of this, his primary source. In the words of Davies and Allison (1997:472): '....the main point seems to be that Jesus' sacrifice is the basis of a new covenant'.⁶⁵

But once again there is more that should be said. Noting that 'Jesus' sacrifice is the basis of a new covenant' falls short of explaining the significance of this fact and in so doing misses a particularly striking fact about Matthew's use of Jeremiah 31. In the second formula quotation in Matthew 2:17-18, Matthew quotes from Jeremiah 31:15, equating the grief surrounding the slaughter of the children in Bethlehem with the grief experienced in Jerusalem and Judah at the time of the exile. Herod's command, Pharaoh-like in its murderous intent, is a stark reminder that there is more to restoration than a mere physical return to a homeland and suggests, particularly in the light of Matthew's application of Jeremiah 31:15, that in reality the exile is far from over. But Jeremiah 31:15 is set within the context of a great promise of restoration for Israel and Judah (Jeremiah 30:1 - 31:40) and serves in that context to underscore the extraordinary restoration that God will bring about. Those who mourned bitterly (31:15) are now commanded to 'refrain from

⁶⁵ The suggestion by Davies and Allison that 'one might even wish to urge, given the possible allusion to Isa 53.12, that the notion of a new covenant comes from Deutero-Isaiah' (1997:473), is striking and underlines the fact that, even though explicit references to Isaiah are largely absent from the passion narrative, the theological influence of the book is not. Indeed it may well be that by retaining the more general ἵνα πληρωθῶσιν αἱ γραφαὶ τῶν προφητῶν Matthew is recognizing a fundamental concurrence of the eschatological vision among the prophets of the exile, notwithstanding the distinctive contribution of each one.

weeping' in the light of the coming restoration from exile - a restoration that is described in terms of a *new exodus* (30:1-14) and which will also incorporate a *new covenant* (31:27-34). It is in my opinion this restoration from exile, this *new beginning* that Jesus has in mind when he describes his impending death in terms of a [new] covenant. And by incorporating these words of Jesus within the context of another plot to kill him (Matthew 26:1-5 *cf* 2:13) and under the general rubric of fulfilment (Matthew 26:56), Matthew brings his story and its relationship to Israel's own story of exile and restoration full-circle offering comfort from mourning and a new beginning to those who align themselves with a crucified Messiah.

The Fruit of the Vine (Matthew 26:29)

Jesus' reference to the blood of the covenant is immediately followed by a declaration of intended abstinence which not only serves as 'another passion prediction' but looks beyond imminent death to 'resurrection and eschatological victory' (Davies & Allison 1997:475).⁶⁶ Jesus will not drink of the fruit of the vine until τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης when he will share it with his disciples in his Father's kingdom. The image of drinking the fruit of the vine anew in the Father's kingdom linked as it is with the 'blood of the covenant' recalls Exodus 24:8-11 where following the ratification of the covenant, a representative number of the Israelite elders are allowed access to God and 'eat and drink' in the presence of the 'God of Israel', thus enjoying and modelling the ideal of fellowship with God which was the primary goal of the Exodus (*cf* Exodus 15:13-18; 29:46). But it also recalls the promise of the great eschatological banquet which the LORD himself will provide 'on his holy mountain' (Isaiah 25:1-9) and which is itself a development of the Exodus ideal. God who judged Egypt and lead his people to his 'holy habitation' will according to Isaiah 24 and 26 one day both judge the nations of the world and save those who wait for him (Isaiah 25:9), bringing them to share with all the redeemed in glorious celebration in the presence of God. It is this day and this experience of fellowship with God and with Jesus for those who share in the new exodus and the new covenant through the forgiveness of sins, which Jesus has in view in Matthew 26:29 (*cf* Hebrews 9:26-28).

⁶⁶ The focus of this 'prediction' in 26:29, *viz* death and resurrection, is thus consistent with the three major predictions in 16:21, 17:22-23 and 20:17-19. The notion of eschatological fulfilment is however more clearly present.

The cup of God's wrath (Matthew 26:39-42)

A third way in which Jesus' rejection and death are interpreted is in terms of his willingness to 'drink the cup' which the Father has placed into his hand (26:39-42). Despite claims to the contrary it seems best to concur with those who view the words 'this cup' (τὸ ποτήριον τοῦτο - vs 39) as a reference to 'the cup of God's wrath' spoken about within the Old Testament and inter-testamental literature⁶⁷ and in particular within the writings of the prophets who proclaim both the impending exile of Judah and the promise of a return for the remnant. In Isaiah 51:17, 22 and Jeremiah 25:15, 17, 27-28 respectively the image of the 'cup of God's wrath' is used in two different ways. It is used first as a symbol of the judgement of the exile, then as a symbol of the end of the exile as the nations are made to drink from the cup of God's wrath which has now been removed from Judah's hand. My suggestion is that in Gethsemane a similar exchange takes place. Jesus willingly accepts the cup of God's wrath so that through his death all those who are beneficiaries of the blood of the covenant (26:28) may be restored *from exile* through the forgiveness of their sins and experience free access to God's presence and renewed fellowship with God because of that forgiveness.

The Vindication of the Son of Man

Each of the above key statements has as its primary focus the impending death of Jesus, a fact which is entirely consistent with the immediate context of 26:54 and 26:56 *viz* the betrayal and arrest of Jesus and the desertion of the disciples. But the earlier *programmatic* statements made by Jesus himself with regard to his mission *viz* his own direct predictions of his death, are not solely negative in tone. In each of these (16:21; 17:22-23; 20:17-19) there is reference both to *humiliation* and *exaltation*, to *death* and to *resurrection*. What is more, the order is significant. For both Jesus and his disciples, the path to vindication and a life saved is via humiliation and a life lost. This raises the question of *where* vindication is found in the final narrative section of the gospel and *what* the relationship of this vindication is to the fulfilment of 'the writings of the prophets'?

⁶⁷ Davies & Allison 1997:497 state that 'in the OT, intertestamental literature, and the Apocalypse 'cup' is most often used figuratively in texts about suffering, especially suffering God's wrath or judgement.'

In addition to the comments made in connection with *conflict resolution* and the plot of Matthew's gospel, we may note that the final narrative section of the gospel does list a number of claims for vindication. The most noteworthy of these are: *first*, the promise of drinking the fruit of the vine anew in the kingdom (26:29)(see above); *second*, the reference to Jesus' resurrection and the implied restoration of the disciples (26:32); *third*, Jesus' claim that the ruling council will *see* (ὁψέσθαι) his vindication as Son of Man⁶⁸; *fourth*, the respective statements about Jesus' innocence and righteousness by Judas (27:4) and Pilate's wife (27:19); *fifth*, ironically, the sign above the cross (27:37); *sixth*, the tearing of the temple veil at the moment of Jesus' death together with the earthquake, the 'resurrection of the holy ones' and the confession of the soldiers (27:51-54) ⁶⁹and finally *eighth*, the actual resurrection of Jesus himself and his final commission to his disciples (28:1-20). Each of these demonstrate that the death of Jesus on the cross was not in reality the powerless thing it appeared to be or indeed the end of the story. In the words of the angel, a reliable spokesman on God's behalf, 'Jesus who has been crucified...has risen, just as he said' (28:5-6). For the narrator and hence for the ideal reader, Jesus' death and resurrection, though distinct events within the story, are inseparable. Unlike Luke (and Paul) Matthew does

⁶⁸ Davies and Allison (1997:529-532) have an excellent discussion of this statement, including comprehensive references to possible Jewish parallels. On reflection I must concur with their view that we are dealing here with a conflation of Psalm 110:1 and Daniel 7:13, possibly but not necessarily in the light of Jewish usage. The purpose of Jesus' answer to Caiaphas' question is not to deny the reality of his Messiahship but to qualify its content (Carson 1984:555). Matthew's replacement of Mark's 'Εγώ εἰμι, και' with Σὺ εἶπας· πλὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἀπ' ἄρτι underlines Jesus' challenge of Caiaphas' and the ruling council's misapprehension of his person and assures them that he will in the end be vindicated before them. The phrase ἀπ' ἄρτι is surely to be maintained (see Davies & Allison 1997:531). Just as Jesus followed the declaration at Caesarea Philippi with plain teaching 'from that time on' ('Απὸ τότε - 16:21) about his impending death, so now Jesus in the face of that death assures his enemies of evidence 'from that time on' for those who have eyes to see of his Messiahship. Matthew's narrative provides the reader with such evidence e.g. torn temple curtain, the resurrection of the holy ones, the declaration of the centurion and notably, Jesus' own resurrection and impending ascension to which, in my opinion, the phrase coming on the clouds primarily points.

⁶⁹ The account of the tearing of the temple veil and Matthew's interspersing of the account of the earthquake and the resurrection of the 'holy ones' between it and the confession by the centurion has understandably evoked a lot of discussion (cf. Senior 1976:312-29; Carson 1984:580-583; Brown 1994:1097-1140; Hagner 1995:846-53; Davies & Allison 1997:628-43). In my opinion it is best to take these series of events as fundamentally *apocalyptic* in style and *eschatological* in function. Although they link Jesus' death and resurrection, they also underline that it is the death of Jesus that seals the judgement of unbelieving Israel (symbolised by her leaders and religious institutions, notably the Temple) and at the same time ushers in the new age of salvation, not only for the faithful of old who like Jesus are a kind of 'first-fruits', but for all who will make the good confession in the face of a crucified King. With the death of Jesus, a new and living way to God is opened up.

not directly relate Jesus' resurrection to the fulfilment of scripture.⁷⁰ But he does see it very clearly as the fulfilment of Jesus' own words and therefore as part of the Divine Plan for Jesus to which, according to Matthew, the scriptures clearly testify.

3.2. *Direct Quotations and Allusions other than formula quotations*

The question of direct quotations other than the clearly identifiable formula quotations and that of possible Old Testament allusions within Matthew's gospel once again raises the issue of our definition of terms. For our present purposes, we will follow the definitions proposed by Douglas Moo (1983) and adopted by Senior in his article. According to these definitions, explicit quotations 'are those that employ an introductory formula to set them off from the context', implicit quotations are 'relatively lengthy, word for word parallels to the OT' and allusions are present where the text 'utilizes Scriptural words and phrases without introduction and without disrupting the flow of the narrative' (Senior 1997b:89n1; cf Moo 1983:18-21). Thus Senior's category 'direct quotations other than the formula quotations' includes both *implicit quotations* viz those that are a-formulaic (e.g. Matthew 10:35; 21:9) and *explicit quotations* (e.g. Matthew 2:5-6; 3:3), which though they may have some formula attached, do not conform to the full definition of a formula quotation.⁷¹

Of course a thorough investigation of each quotation and allusion is beyond the scope of our present project, even if we were to restrict our focus to universally agreed quotations and allusions. Nor do we want to engage in unnecessary repetition of material covered elsewhere in our study. For this reason I have restricted my focus in this section to quotations rather than allusions and more particularly to quotations which are peculiar to Matthew rather than those

⁷⁰ Note that in both Luke 24:25-26 and 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 we have a clear indication that the early church interpreted *both* the death *and* the resurrection of Jesus as being in accordance with the scriptures.

⁷¹ See note 3 above. Davies and Allison identify 10 formula quotations viz Matthew 1:22-23; 2:15, 17-18, 23; 4:14-16; 8:17; 12:17-21; 13:35; 21:5; 27:9-10 (1997:573-74 see esp note 2) and seventeen direct quotations common to Matthew and Mark, four common to Matthew and Luke and eleven which are peculiar to Matthew in addition to the ten formula quotations (1988:34-57).

which he shares with Mark or Luke. Of these eleven quotations,⁷² six form part of the Sermon on the Mount and provide further clarification of what it means for Jesus as the authoritative teacher to fulfill the Law and the Prophets. We have already discussed this point at some length (*see above*) and will therefore not discuss these quotations any further. This leaves five other passages containing quotations unique to Matthew which, according to Senior (1997b:106) 'are particularly illustrative' of Matthew's 'theology of fulfilment.' To these we now turn our attention.

The Shepherd of Israel (Matthew 2:5-6)

The conflation of Old Testament verses in Matthew 2:6 is simply described as that which 'has been written through the prophet'. According to Davies and Allison (1988:242), such 'composite or merged quotations are few and far between in Rabbinic sources' even though they are fairly common in the New Testament. This is the first incidence of the phenomenon in Matthew (*cf* Matthew 21:5; 27:9-10). The reference to the prophet (*sing*) is to Micah, but Matthew has also drawn on the traditions recorded within the Deuteronomist and / or the Chronicler regarding the recognition of David as king over all Israel (*cf* 2 Samuel 5:2; 1 Chronicles 11:2) to further emphasise the Davidic element inherent in the Micah text. This emphasis on David may well account for Matthew's change of 'Bethlehem Ephrathah' (MT) to 'Bethlehem in the land of Judah' (*cf* Matthew 1:1-2). The 'Yahweh as shepherd' *motif* which underlies Micah 4:4 had its roots in the wilderness wandering traditions (Exodus 15:13, Numbers 27:17). By the time of David this *motif*, while not abandoned (*cf* Psalm 23:1), had been modified to reflect God's rule over his people mediated through the LORD's anointed - in particular David and his Son, the builder of God's house (*cf* 2 Samuel 7:5-16). Thus in the eschatological picture described in Micah 4:1-5:5, God is described as gathering his scattered flock and bringing them back to the mountain of his dwelling (Mount Zion in Jerusalem) where God will rule over them through one who is from the town of Bethlehem and the least significant of the clans of Judah. The reference to a Davidic king could hardly be clearer (*cf* 1 Samuel 16:1-13).

⁷² Senior (1997b:106 note 36) refers to Davies & Allison's list of 21 quotations peculiar to Matthew. But this figure includes the formula quotations. Taking the number of formula quotations at 10, the actual number of 'direct quotations other than formula quotations' (Senior 1997b:106) is in fact 11 as a comparison with the list provided by Davies & Allison (1988:50-52) clearly shows.

Three things in particular must be noted concerning the prophecy in Micah and its application by Matthew. *First*, although the future ruler will come from Bethlehem, his rule will still be exercised in traditional Davidic terms from within Jerusalem and in association with the 'house of the God of Jacob'. Micah is neither anti-temple nor anti-Jerusalem. Indeed, like Isaiah with whom the words in Micah 4:1-3 are shared (*cf* Isaiah 2:1-4), Micah longs for a restored city in which justice will dwell. It thus seems unwarranted to argue on the basis of the fact that Matthew quotes Micah and mentions Bethlehem before Jerusalem in 2:1 that 'in the conflict between Davidic Bethlehem and Herodian Jerusalem', Bethlehem is given 'prominence and leadership over Israel' (Dumbrell 1999:21) or for that matter to suggest that the Magi's bypassing of Jerusalem on their return guaranteed the downfall of Jerusalem (Nolan 1979:39).⁷³ Matthew's application of Micah to his narrative merely serves to verify Bethlehem as the birthplace of the Messiah and to further authenticate Matthew's claim that Jesus who was born in Bethlehem is precisely that Messiah, the true King of the Jews.⁷⁴ It also serves to highlight the marked contrast between the religious leaders who know the scriptures but refuse to do homage to the one born king of the Jews and later become his mortal enemies (Matthew 26:62-67) and the Magi who, though unlearned in relation to Israel's scriptures, worship the child when they find him in Bethlehem as the scriptures predicted. *Second*, in Micah 4:1-5:5, the re-establishment of the kingdom of God within Jerusalem will have world-wide implications, notably the coming of the Gentiles to do homage before Israel's God and Israel's king. Thus the combination of Bethlehem as the messianic birthplace and the centrality of the 'LORD's house' associated as it was with the Davidic Messiah, and the coming of foreigners to do homage (as was the case with Solomon, the Son of David the Temple builder) make Micah a text ideally suited to Matthew's purpose in the early part of his narrative. *Third*, we note that as with the formula quotations surrounding Matthew 2:5-6 (Matthew 1:23 *cf* Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 2:15 *cf* Hosea 11:1; Matthew 2:17-18 *cf* Jeremiah 31:15), Micah 5:2 in its original context has in view both the oppression and impending exile of Israel and Judah because of their rebellion against the LORD and the promise of restoration from exile in the 'last days' (Micah 4:1; *cf* 4:6). For Matthew, these *last days* have dawned with the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem in the land of Judah and with them the time of

⁷³ If there is any *geographic* component to conflict in Matthew's gospel it is surely between *Gentile Galilee* and *Jewish Judea* - *cf* Matthew 2:19-23; 4:12-17. See however the discussion in Davies and Allison (1988:2238-39).

⁷⁴ On the interchangeability of the titles 'Christ' and 'King of the Jews' see Matthew 2:1-6; 27:22-31.

restoration for all among the ‘people of Israel’ who will repent (2:6; 3:1-12; 4:17) and of *inclusion* for all among the nations who come to do homage before Israel’s true king and shepherd.

Mercy not Sacrifice...(Matthew 9:13; 12:7)

The second direct quotation to which we turn our attention is from Hosea 6:6 and is added twice by Matthew to material which he has taken over from Mark. In Matthew 9:13 the quotation “Ελεος θέλω καὶ οὐ θυσίαν from Hosea 6:6 (LXX) precedes Jesus’ mission statement οὐ γὰρ ἦλθον καλέσαι δικαίους ἀλλὰ ἁμαρτωλούς (*cf* Mark 2:17) and serves to underline that the Pharisees, for all their religious zeal, had fundamentally misunderstood God’s primary concern for the salvation of sinners. In this they stood in stark contrast and indeed opposition to Jesus whose conduct was completely in line with God’s primary concern and purpose. That a quotation from Hosea should be included at this point is entirely appropriate, for despite all its strong language against Israel’s rebellion, Hosea is perhaps *the* great Old Testament book about God’s loyal love for his unfaithful people.

According to the book of Hosea, Israel’s fundamental sin was the sin of spiritual adultery (1:2), a sin which had dogged the nation from the very earliest times (6:7; 11:1-2) and which could not be covered over with a veneer of religiosity even when sanctioned by officialdom (5:1-7) for it reached to the very heart of the covenant relationship between Yahweh and Israel (6:7). Nor did this sin remain alone, for as it drew Israel away from Yahweh to foreign gods, it led her away from the justice, mercy and faithfulness which characterised Yahweh himself and was embodied in his law (*cf* Matthew 23:23-24). In its original context in Hosea, then, the saying ‘I desire mercy not sacrifice’ was not a rejection of the sacrificial system *per se*, but a declaration that loyalty to the God of the covenant lay at the very root of Yahweh’s relationship with Israel. And it was this same loyalty to the covenant, this prizing of mercy above religious formalities that caused Yahweh to hand his people over to the harsh rule of a foreign king (9:3; 11:5) and the effective cessation of their religious observances (3:4) so that they would cry out to him as they had done in Egypt (5:15) and so be drawn back to Him again (3:5; 6:1-3). Such a drawing back of those in spiritual exile was precisely why Jesus had come (Matthew 9:13) and to oppose such work, especially in the name of man-made tradition and religious scruple (*cf* Matthew 15:1-20),

was surely to manifest the same spiritual ignorance and obduracy that the leaders and people had in Hosea's day when they traded mercy for religious formalism (Hosea 6:6-7). Indeed, as we saw in our discussion of Jesus' conflict with the religious leaders, allowed to continue unchecked this opposition would lead to the absolute rejection and murder of God's Messiah and in its turn would place before its perpetrators the threat of an exile far worse than that suffered at the hands of the Assyrians into whose hands God had delivered Israel (*cf* Matthew 23:1-39).

The second quotation of Hosea 6:6 occurs in Matthew 12:7 where Matthew has prefixed the verse to Jesus' claim as the Son of Man to be κύριος τοῦ σαββάτου. For the Pharisees, the fundamental issue is again a matter of the law - in this case what is lawful upon the Sabbath day (*cf* the repetition of the word ἔξεστιν in vss 2,4,10,12). But for Jesus the matter extends beyond legalism to his own personal authority. Thus the reference to David's conduct when pursued by Saul is not just a clever bit of casuistry but raises the more fundamental question of Jesus' own person in comparison with that of David, the great king of Israel. And as Matthew 12:6 makes even more explicit, the reference to the priestly concession actually focuses on the person of Jesus in comparison with the temple.⁷⁵ Luz (2001:179) points out that the pericope is 'artistically structured. After the double Οὐκ ἀνέγνωτε (vv.3,5) that in each case introduces a biblical argument in the form of a question, the conclusion follows in v 7: You did not recognize; otherwise you would have acted differently.' But what or rather *who* was it that the Pharisees failed to recognize? Surely verse 8 gives the answer. They failed to recognize exactly who Jesus was and therefore to understand the full extent of his authority. Like the inhabitants and leaders of Israel and Judah in the days of Hosea, the Pharisees were blind to God's words for all their reading of them. It is little wonder then that Jesus later describes the Pharisees and teachers of the law as 'blind guides' (*cf* Matthew 23:16, 24) who cannot differentiate between the lesser and the greater matters of the law precisely because like their fathers before them they could not recognize the time of God's visitation (Matthew 23:34-39). Indeed there may well be a closer connection between Matthew 12 and 24 in that the 'innocent' whom the Pharisees condemned

⁷⁵ Luz (2001:181-84) argues that the force of the neuter in the phrase μέζον ἐστίν should be retained *ie* what Jesus is saying is that something greater than the temple and its sacrifices *viz* mercy (*cf* Hosea 6:6) is here. For Jesus' *halakah* therefore mercy has become a central controlling principle. While this view is attractive it breaks down later in the chapter with regard to Jonah and Solomon. On reflection it seems better to concur with Gundry (1982:223) (*cf* Davies & Allison 1991:314) that 'the neuter gender ...stresses the quality of superior greatness rather than Jesus' personal identity.'

were not only Jesus' disciples but Jesus himself whose death they begin to plot (12:14). Thus Jesus receives from their hands the same treatment that the prophets had received in their day. And they in turn, travel further down a road which if unchecked will lead to their own condemnation and ultimate exclusion from the presence of God (Matthew 23:33, 36).

Calloused Hearts (Matthew 13:14-15)

There are two main issues to resolve with regard to Matthew's use of Isaiah 6:9-10 in Matthew 13:14-15. The first issue to be resolved is whether Matthew 13:14-15 is original to the gospel of Matthew or a later, albeit very early and thus well attested, interpolation. In favour of the latter Davies and Allison, concurring with others, argue that '(i) ἀναπληροῦται and προφητεία are not found in the other formula quotations and indeed are Matthean *hapax legomena* (ii) The gospel text runs smoothly if 13.14-15 is omitted.... (iii) Only here is a formula quotation placed on Jesus' lips (iv) The text is almost purely LXX which runs against the Hebraizing tendency of the other formula quotations (v) The citation seems superfluous because Isa 6.9 has just been alluded to so clearly....(vi) Acts 28:26-7 agrees exactly with Mt 13.14-15' and was thus possibly 'the source for the gospel quotation' and '(vii) λέγουσα in the nominative qualifying προφητεία (so that the prophet himself speaks the word) is unexpected. Matthew otherwise has *God himself speak, through the prophet*' (1991:394; cf Stendahl (1968:129-32); Soares-Prabhu 1976:31-35). But surely all that the above reasoning establishes is that Matthew 13:14-15 is an explicit quotation rather than a formula quotation and that at most Matthew adopted the quotation with its introduction from tradition. Indeed, as Luz (2001:237 note 14) quite correctly points out, 'the variety among the introductions to the quotations that for various reasons could not be stylized as formula quotations is quite large in Matthew'.⁷⁶ There is in fact good reason why Matthew may have chosen to employ / construct at this specific juncture an introductory formula which was distinct from that of the normal formula quotations and that has to do with the second main issue, viz that of the function of the quotation.

A comparison between Matthew 13:13 and Mark 4:12 reveals not just a variation in the text form

⁷⁶ Luz's detailed rejoinder of the arguments of those who see Matthew 13:14-15 as an interpolation is in my opinion conclusive. See Luz (2001:237); cf Carson (1984:310-11).

of the quotation but a very striking change of preposition, Matthew preferring ὅτι to Mark's ἵνα. The nett effect of this change and Matthew's truncation of the Isaiah quotation after συνίουσιν, is to weaken the causal tone which is found in Mark. Whereas Mark's quotation presents the parables almost as a means of blinding the hearers (in keeping with Isaiah 6 itself), Matthew depicts the use of parables as a consequence of a blindness which is already there. The clause διὰ τοῦτο ἐν παραβολαῖς αὐτοῖς λαλῶ in vs 13 echos the question Διὰ τί ἐν παραβολαῖς λαλεῖς αὐτοῖς; in vs 10 and the following statement answers it: The parables are not *in order to* blind (ἵνα) but *because* the hearers are blind and deaf (ὅτι). For Matthew then the twin phrases βλέποντες οὐ βλέπουσιν καὶ ἀκούοντες οὐκ ἀκούουσιν οὐδὲ συνίουσιν are *descriptive* of Israel in Jesus' day and it is this point that is strengthened by the more extensive quotation from Isaiah 6. What has just been alluded to is now made explicit. What Isaiah said concerning his own generation, was just as true of the generation of Jesus' day. But the quotation also evokes the wider context of Isaiah 6 which is not merely about the blindness of Judah and its deafness to God's word through his prophet, whether descriptive or judicial. It also focusses attention on the *remnant*, the holy seed (קִרְיָא זָרַע, עֲשָׂרִיָּה) which will be the guarantee against total extinction of the nation and the basis of the promised restoration (Isaiah 6:11-13). It seems to me then to be reasonable to suggest that Matthew's use of Isaiah 6:9-10 to describe the crowds in Jesus' day (similar in spiritual ignorance to the generation of the exile) thus also evokes an association between the disciples to whom the secret of the kingdom has been given and who are addressed not in *parables* but *similes*⁷⁷ and this remnant. Those who like the disciples have become true hearers of his words *ie* hearers who understand (συνίουσιν - a key word in Matthew 13) (*cf* Matthew 7:24-25) are that remnant, who are being restored by Jesus and who in turn become the bearers of the *good news* to and the means of the restoration for, not only those among the lost sheep of Israel who will receive them (Matthew 10:1ff), but for any among the nations who will submit to Jesus' authoritative rule (Matthew 28:16-20).

⁷⁷ I owe this insight to Dumbrell, who points out on the basis of nomenclature and the transition which occurs in Matthew 13:36, that 'parables were directed at the crowds vv 1-35 but kingdom similes (without the use of the word parable) were for the disciples vv. 36-52' (1999:54).

The final uniquely Matthean direct quotation to which we turn our attention is the quotation of Psalm 8:2 (8:3 MT, LXX) by Jesus in defence of the acclaim which he received from the children in the temple area (Matthew 21:16). The quotation has a two-fold setting in Matthew, first as one of a series of quotations associated with the triumphal entry (see Matthew 21:4 *cf* Zechariah 9:9; Matthew 21:9 *cf* Psalm 118:26), second as part of the ongoing conflict between Jesus and the religious authorities, particularly in relation to the temple (see Matthew 21:13 *cf* Isaiah 56:7; Jeremiah 7:11). It also forms part of a larger section in which Psalm 118 plays a significant role, encompassing the events from Jesus' entry into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:9 ff; Psalm 118:26) to Jesus' words of warning against the city and his eschatological application of Psalm 118:26 in that regard. At the heart of this section lies the challenge of the religious authorities to Jesus' authority and Jesus' dire warning to them, again from Psalm 118, that their ongoing rejection of him, God's chosen cornerstone (Matthew 21:42 *cf* Psalm 118:22-23), will have disastrous consequences for the nation and all its institutions, but not for the kingdom of God, which will continue to bear true fruit (Matthew 21:43). It is little wonder then that this section of the gospel not only records the fact of the determination of the Jewish authorities to arrest Jesus and have him put to death (Matthew 21:46, 26:4), but also records some of Jesus' strongest words against the Jewish leaders and their religious institutions, including the temple itself which as in the days of Jeremiah (*cf* Jeremiah 7:11) had become no more than a religious talisman. It is thus no surprise when the reader encounters Jesus' words predicting yet another destruction of the temple as part of the approaching desolation of Jerusalem (Matthew 23:37-24:35).

In the midst of this rising conflict with its terrible end result, first for Jesus' but ultimately for his enemies, the praise of the children and Jesus' consequent appeal to Psalm 8:3 have a vital role to play in shaping the implied reader's understanding of the events that are taking place. In its original setting in the MT and LXX, the reference to the *strength* *יָמִי* (MT) or *praise αἶνον* (LXX - so also Matthew) being established through the mouths of babes as a means of silencing foes, comes as something of a surprise, although it is well attested. Certainly the Psalm appears to read quite naturally if the verse is omitted. The Psalm affirms two truths which have their origin in the

early chapters of Genesis and which ideally were to shape Hebrew understanding of both humanity and kingship. The first of these truths is that Yahweh the Lord is the Great King over all the earth by virtue of his having created it. The kingship of Yahweh in Genesis 1, frequently celebrated in the Psalms, is exercised through his word and can be seen in the recurring pattern: *God said...and it was so* as well as in words like *separated* and *called*. This divine rule of God is what the Psalmist is referring to when he speaks of ‘God’s name’ as majestic in all the earth. The second truth found in Genesis and the Psalm is that humankind has been given kingship over the earth by the God the great king. This is what is conveyed in relation to humanity as God’s image (Genesis 1:26ff) and is in view when man is described in Psalm 8 as having been given authority by God to rule over his works. Thus, to the psalmist’s great amazement, puny man is allowed to rule where God rules (vss 5-9).

Now this expression of wonder and humility - ‘what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him’ (NIV) - is the appropriate response of man to his creator. Though man has been given to rule over God’s handiwork, he has this rule by the gift of God and is accountable to God. And, bearing in mind the association of Psalm 8 with David, this response also therefore epitomises the ideal attitude of Israel’s king, whom God had made ruler over his chosen people. This attitude of humility can be seen in David’s response to God’s promise in 2 Samuel 7:18-29. It is also present in the words of Solomon, the son of David when, confronted with the responsibility of kingship over Israel, he described himself as no more than a little child in need of God’s wisdom (1 Kings 3:7-9), a description which pleased the LORD. The antithesis of this attitude of dependency upon God is the quest for autonomy. Both the story of humankind (Genesis 3-11) and the story of Israel’s kings (*cf* 1 Samuel 15; 1 Kings 11-2 Kings 25) showed that in reality the quest for autonomy and independence from God’s rule predominated. This resulted in the expulsion of Israel from the land, just as the first humans were expelled from the garden of Eden. And it is this same spirit of autonomy and rebellion that characterises those who in Psalm 8 are described as ἐχθρόν καὶ ἐκδικητήν. The LXX specifies that they are God’s enemies⁷⁸ and within the context of the Psalter as a whole these enemies are to be seen in the light of the wicked of Psalm 1 and those who take their stand against the LORD and his Anointed

⁷⁸ Although in the Psalms, the enemies are frequently either the enemies of the nation or of the individual (see Kraus 1991, 125-36; Williams 1997:365-71), the LXX make it clear that the enemies who are in view here are Yahweh’s enemies (ἐνεκα τῶν ἐχθρῶν σου - 8:3 LXX).

One in Psalms 2 - 7. God's answer for these enemies is to take the words of those who are of little significance in the eyes of the proud and haughty - the toddlers who are not yet weaned and perhaps metaphorically David himself (*cf* Psalm 131) - and through their words to silence the clamour of his enemies - God taking the foolish and weak things to silence the wise and strong (*cf* 1 Corinthians 1:27-29). By pointing back to the Psalm and by equating the praise of the children for himself with the children's praise for God in Psalm 8, Jesus' thus claims in the clearest terms to be not only *a* son of David but *the* Son of David, God's true Anointed One⁷⁹ before whom the chief priests and the teachers of the law ought to do homage as the Magi had done at his birth and the people had done on the way to the city of David (Matthew 21:9). By their indignation and opposition to Jesus however these men demonstrate themselves to be more than Jesus' enemies. They are in fact God's enemies, a fact which Jesus quotation of Psalm 8:3 clearly implies.

3.3. *Incidents or Episodes within the narrative that appear to be inspired in whole or part by Old Testament passages, events or personages.*

The very wording of this third and final category for his investigation of Matthew's use of the Old Testament, reflects Senior's recognition that while this category 'remains an important element in Matthew's repertoire of fulfilment theology' it is 'more difficult to define' (1997b:107). How indeed, in the absence of clear verbal or thematic indicators, does one decide that a particular incident or episode is in fact actually inspired by an Old Testament passage, event, or personage? Put in slightly different terms, how, for example, does the interpreter of the gospel know that what appears to him or her to be an instance of *typology*, is in fact not merely a case of eisegesis, the reader reading into the text what is simply not there?⁸⁰ Or take the category of *structural citation* in which, according to Moo, 'a Scriptural passage furnishes the

⁷⁹ The force of Jesus' question in Matthew 21:25 is to underline this point. John's baptism and therefore Jesus' anointing by the prophet and the Holy Spirit, are indeed 'from heaven'. Jesus has not taken this office upon himself nor has it been thrust upon him by man. He is king by God's choice.

⁸⁰ Such an observation of course raises the issues of author intention and reader response. For the importance of author intention with regard to such categories as allusion and typology see Allison (1993:1-8). The point is really quite a simple one. For something within one text to be truly an allusion to something in another text, there must be a sense of purpose or deliberation on the part of the author of the text in which the allusion occurs. If this is not the case, any overlap between these texts is co-incidental and ought not to become the substructure of some theological or interpretive edifice constructed by the reader.

basic structure around which a narrative is composed' (1983:21). Which in fact came first - the *event* preserved within the tradition of the early church and interpreted within the *kerugma* and *gospel record*? Or the *Scripture* and its *tradition history* which forms the basis of the gospel narrative? Nor is this question without heuristic significance, for if one questions the historical basis of the gospel events, one is more likely to seek the origin of the narrative within some form of structural citation and consequently to impose upon the text the categories of such a citation. Two examples must suffice to make this point and to serve as the basis of our discussion of this third and final category of Matthew's use of the Old Testament. Both are well known, both are mentioned as examples by Senior and both have received detailed attention from scholars at various times.⁸¹ The two are Matthew's so-called *Moses' typology* and the apparent influence upon Matthew's Galilean section of *exodus traditions*. We will consider each of these in turn although they are of course closely related.

One greater than Moses?

In 1993, Dale Allison, who at that time was co-authoring the massive ICC commentary on Matthew with W.D. Davies, published a book in which he explored in detail the presence of Mosaic motifs in the Matthew's gospel (see Allison 1993). As Allison points out in the appendix to his work (Allison 1993:293-328), he was by no means the first person to raise this question. But his work may justly be described as one of the most comprehensive attempts to explore the relationship between Jesus and Moses in Matthew's gospel and for this reason we will use it as a sounding board for our discussion.

Allison begins his investigation with a survey of the way in which Moses has been used as a *type* of significant figures outside of Matthew's gospel, first with regard to Jewish and then with regard to Christian figures (1993:11-134). The survey is impressive, if not always persuasive, and leads to a number of conclusions regarding *typology* and its application to the figure of Moses (see pages 91-95 and 131-134 in particular). *First*, says Allison, Moses 'served as a well-used type because he was many things, an occupier of several offices...and Matthew's motives for

⁸¹ See Kingsbury (1975); Donaldson (1985); France (1989:185-91); Brown (1993:45-232); Davies (1989); Allison (1993) and Swartley (1994), as well as the discussion in the major commentaries.

assimilating his hero to such a one may have been, or rather probably were, multiple.’ *Second*, as far as the majority of Jewish texts is concerned, the typological relationship between type and antitype are not made ‘explicit’. While some key words may be mentioned, ‘most of the typological features remain covert and so the reader is expected to perform what has been called a ‘sub-reading.’’ It is at this point, according to Allison, that the most notable difference between Jewish and later Christian sources is found, for in the latter (apart from those of the first century), the typological illusions are more explicit than implicit, perhaps due to ‘the constant influx of neophytes’ (:133). *Third*, in many of the texts ‘comparison with Moses...serves to exalt a man and make him like the ideal king, saviour, prophet, lawgiver or intercessor’, this *contra* the notion that it is in fact Moses who is being denigrated, a practice which would certainly have been unacceptable within a Jewish or indeed a Jewish Christian milieu. Thus Jesus may be seen as one greater than Moses, but such comparison only serves to underline just how great Jesus really is, given Moses’ greatness. *Fourth*, and this point is of fundamental importance to Allison, ‘the parallels between Moses and later figures and between the Exodus and subsequent events always appear amidst multitudinous differences, and there is always matter - much matter - extraneous to a typology.’ The consequence of this says Allison is that ‘it is accordingly invalid ...to dismiss a typology solely on the grounds that the type and the antitype are dissimilar.’ *Fifth*, Allison points out that by beginning the survey of Jewish parallels to Moses with a study of the Jewish Bible itself, he has demonstrated that ‘not only did Jewish tradition supply a precedent for Matthew’s execution of a Moses typology, but such precedent was to hand in documents the evangelist studied, treasured, and probably knew by heart.’ This point, which necessarily identifies the author of the gospel as a Jewish Christian, is particularly significant for a work on Matthew’s use of the Old Testament.

The discussion of ‘Moses’ figures in Jewish and Christian texts, then gives way in part two of Allison’s work to a detailed discussion of the relevant Matthean texts, primarily in the light of Josephus, Philo and Rabbinic writings, though not without some discussion of possible Old Testament antecedents for Matthew’s Moses’ typology. The discussion is conducted on the basis of ‘six devices commonly used in constructing typologies: explicit statement, inexplicit borrowing, reminiscent circumstances, key words or phrases, structural imitation, and resonant syllabic and / or word patterns’ an impressive array of criteria which, according to Allison, have within the ‘birth and infancy narrative’ ‘been employed in the construction of an extensive

typology' so that 'the effect is an infancy narrative permeated by Mosaic motifs' (1993:140).

A detailed interaction with Allison's arguments for each reference cannot be undertaken here - indeed such an undertaking will in large measure merely repeat views argued elsewhere in our discussions. What ought to be said at this juncture is that whereas a careful reading of Allison's arguments has led me to renewed conviction of my earlier view regarding Jesus as a 'second Israel' who undergoes a new exodus, the case for Jesus as a 'Moses' figure - in the sense that Allison means it - seems to me to be sustained only on the basis of special pleading. Rather it appears to me that Allison was on safer ground when he observed at the outset of his discussion that the very foundational and complex nature of the Moses' person, standing as he does at the birth of Israel's salvation history, would inevitably be echoed within later royal / prophetic / priestly figures (like Samuel who again embodies all three) without there being a particular any particular typological interest. Nor does the volume of evidence necessarily secure the case, especially when a significant amount of it is Rabbinic, where quite apart from questions of chronology, there is a particular interest in Torah and therefore Moses, a level of interest which despite his respect for both Torah and Prophets, I, for one, cannot detect in Matthew.

But perhaps the greatest obstacle for Allison's theory of a specific and sustained Moses' typology within Matthew's gospel comes from the very source he claims as his most significant ally, *viz* Matthew's use of the Jewish scriptures. This fact can be illustrated in particular by looking more closely at that one Old Testament text within the infancy narratives that makes explicit reference to the Exodus, *viz* Matthew 2:15 *cf* Hosea 11:1. Allison, recognizing quite rightly the second Israel, second exodus themes that we have noted, as well as the fact that Matthew could hardly have viewed Hosea 11:1 as strict *prediction*, concludes that 'this interpretation means that the reader is to behold in Jesus' story the replay of another, that of the exodus from Egypt, a story whose hero is Moses. In other words, 2:15 by quoting Hos 11:1 tells us that there is a parallelism between what unfolds in Matthew 2 and what unfolded long ago in Egypt' (1993:141). But is this strictly true? Put differently, how does the fact that Matthew quotes from Hosea rather than Exodus affect the parallelism?

Allison himself states that Matthew quotes Hosea 11:1 in a way that is true to the intention and context of that book (*cf* Allison 1993:140-41). Agreed, but what is the intention and context of

Hosea? It is surely not merely to commemorate the exodus and certainly not to present in typological form the story of the man Moses. Rather, Hosea tells the story of God's loyal love on account of which God will save his people from a bondage far worse than Egypt, the bondage of exile brought about not to preserve their lives but because of their sins. Within this context Hosea 11:1 bewails the fact that despite the LORD's kindness to Israel in the first exodus, they repeatedly turned away from Him. Moreover, this unfaithfulness, while culminating in idolatry in the land, was according to the prophet typical of the nation from the very beginning - and certainly from the moment they reached the promised land (*cf* Hosea 6:4-10; 9:10). The effect of this statement by the prophet is devastating and in fact is the one true echo of Moses within Hosea, for it reflects the very sentiments expressed by Moses within Deuteronomy 29 and later by Joshua, Moses successor (Joshua 23). What was full of promise was also full of threat. God who saved a people from bondage, would hand that same people over to bondage if they refused to remain loyal to him. And, says Hosea, the punishment for this unfaithfulness will fit the crime - Israel will go into exile, an exile which in effect reverses the Exodus (Hosea 8:11-9:4) and Israel's privileged status as the people of God will be lost (Hosea 1:8-9). But as we noted earlier in our discussion of Hosea 6:6, God who keeps his threats can in the end not forget his loyal love. God will act to save his people once more, or, as the promise is expressed again in terms echoing the exodus (Hosea 1:11 NIV; 2:2 LXX), 'the people of Judah and the people of Israel will be reunited, and they will appoint for themselves one leader and will go up out of the land (καὶ θήσονται ἑαυτοῖς ἀρχὴν μίαν καὶ ἀναβήσονται ἐκ τῆς γῆς - *cf* Exodus 1:10).⁸² Who is this leader according to the prophet? The answer is that he is Yahweh himself (Hosea 11:8-11; 13:4) who will at last be recognized as the one and only true king of his people. Thus the saviour figure in Hosea is not a second Moses, but Moses' Lord, one who in Matthew's words is God's son and 'God with us.'⁸³ Because of God's great mercy, punishment will not be the final word. Israel's exile will come to an end - The LORD will again lead Israel into the wilderness in a new and eschatological Exodus and by a new covenant betroth them to Himself in 'righteousness, justice,

⁸² The verbal agreement between Hosea 2:2 (LXX) and Exodus 1:10 (LXX) is not exact, but the idea is identical. Later within the prophetic eschatology of the exile period this notion of a mighty army going up out of the land was described in terms of 'resurrection from the dead' (*cf* Ezekiel 37). Here too there is talk of one leader, an echo of Moses yes, but explicitly identified as a Davidic figure who will be both king and shepherd. It is striking that in Luke's account of the transfiguration, the discussion centres on τὴν ἔξοδον αὐτοῦ (Jesus' resurrection?) which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

⁸³ *Cf* Matthew 22:41-44 where Matthew draws a similar contrast between Jesus and David.

love, compassion and faithfulness' (Hosea 2:14-23, cf 1:11; 3:4-5). In my opinion, although as we have noted before Matthew was not unaware of the fact that *some* return had taken place in Israel's history (cf 1:12-Μετὰ δὲ τὴν μετοικεσίαν Βαβυλῶνος), he does not see this as *the* return spoken of in *prophetic eschatology*. Thus he applies Hosea 11:1 to Jesus, the Ideal Israel who as God's Son and God with us, the saviour of his people from their sins, undergoes this *eschatological Exodus*, ushering in both the prospect of an end of Israel's exile and the dawn of the new era of God's rule over His people. This is a point - the key point - which Allison with his concern to remember Moses entirely fails to see. The story has moved on and one greater than Moses is here.⁸⁴

The Second Exodus

Both in the above discussion and elsewhere in the thesis, we have noted the presence of what we can call *exodus traditions* within Matthew's story of Jesus. These traditions, incorporating the twin themes of *deliverance* or *salvation* by *Divine power* on the one hand (God the warrior) and *divine guidance* on the way to the place of God's presence on the other (God the Shepherd) are celebrated in the Song of the Sea, the Song of Moses (cf Exodus 15) and form part of the warp and woof of Old Testament salvation history. To use Swartley's term in the light *inter alia* of Gerhard von Rad's theory of Israelite 'tradition history', the exodus traditions within the Hebrew Bible present us with an example of 'story shaping story' (Swartley 1994:1). And these traditions are clearly present within the 'infancy narrative and the Galilean section of Matthew's gospel', to borrow Swartley's terminology, and in fact beyond,⁸⁵ though in my opinion they are

⁸⁴ A similar point could be argued with regard to the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus' role is not that of mediator of the Law of God but authoritative declarer of the demands of the new covenant which will later be sealed in his own blood. At the end of the sermon, we are told that it is Jesus own words which will determine the outcome of the judgement something that Moses would never have been able to say about his own word but only of the words of the Torah any more than Moses could call himself Lord of the Sabbath or greater than the temple. See Davies ([1964]1989:93-108).

⁸⁵ Swartley's basic thesis is that there are 4 key Old Testament narrative traditions - Exodus-Sinai traditions, Way-Conquest traditions, Temple traditions and Kingship traditions which respectively shape both the *structure* and the *theology* of the Synoptic gospels, though with differing degrees of emphasis in each gospel. Swartley's argument while ultimately unpersuasive in my opinion, does however provide a wealth of very insightful observations and is worth careful consideration. As far as Swartley is concerned the exodus - Sinai tradition shapes the Matthew's infancy narrative and Galilean section which he takes to extend from Matthew 4:12 - 16:20 (1994:61). Allison (1993) and Davies ([1964]1989) respectively see these as extending to the Transfiguration (Davies) and beyond (Allison) - see however Davies ([1964]1989:83-86).

interpretive rather than creative of the events of the narrative.

What is not always noted among Matthean scholars and what we have tried to point out in different ways within our discussions is that the recapitulation of the exodus motif within Matthew's gospel, though it evokes what were undoubtedly the formative events within Israelite salvation history, does so in a way which also reflects the influence of later Israelite *prophetic eschatology*. The pivotal points in the genealogy (Matthew 1:1-17) are not Abraham, Moses and the exodus, but Abraham, David and the exile. Israel's deliverer to be born is not Moses *revivendus* but Isaiah's Immanuel (Matthew 1:21-23). The one explicit reference to the exodus comes through the mouth of the prophet Hosea (*see above*). The children whose slaughter is remembered are not the babes in Egypt, but the babes of Jeremiah's fallen Jerusalem (Matthew 2:18). And the way in the wilderness for the people of God is made not by the pillar of cloud or fire but the voice of Isaiah's messenger. The baptism in the river is associated not with the Reed Sea, but the Jordan river and is not merely an act or re-entry into the land of conquest, but the anointing of the great king whose great conquest is over forces far more terrible than the ancient Canaanites (Matthew 3:1-4:11). And the teaching from the mountain comes not from the mediator of the Torah, but the authoritative teacher of the New Covenant, the one who by baptising with the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11) seeks the law upon the heart of God's blessed people (Matthew 5:1-7:29). And so one could continue.

But there are two particular aspects of the *transformation* of exodus themes that Matthew has undertaken in the light of prophetic eschatology and the story of Jesus and they have to do with the *nature* and *scope* of the deliverance which is envisioned. *First*, the deliverer in Matthew's gospel comes to save his people from their sins, not from socio-economic oppression; *second*, within the scope of this deliverance, are *all* who will come to Jesus, both Jew and Gentile. Neither the miracles nor the 'bread of children' are confined to Israel alone and it is this theme of Gentile inclusion within the *exodus-like* deliverance which is as Swartley (1994:63-67) correctly observes a radical transformation of exodus themes. What he fails to note is that it is entirely consistent with the teaching within Old Testament prophetic eschatology regarding *restoration from exile*, the very eschatology which Matthew so often evokes by way of quotation, allusion and narrative echo

4. The Formula Quotations

During the course of the above discussion and our discussion of the plot of Matthew's gospel we have touched upon some of Matthew's formula quotations as part of his unfolding story of Jesus and as expressive of his theological perspectives. In the process of that study we have noted in passing what may now be stated more categorically. *Each of the formula quotations studied thus far, involves texts drawn from the realm of prophetic eschatology and has particular reference to Israel's impending exile and future restoration.* The conclusion that we have drawn from this is that Matthew who has chosen and crafted these quotations, has a deep interest in demonstrating that in the story of Jesus, the story of Israel's exile and restoration not only finds resolution but takes on new dimensions. The restoration of a remnant within Israel, gathered around the person of Jesus has opened the door for restoration beyond the borders of Israel. But at the same time the ongoing rejection of Jesus by the nation at large and especially by the nation's leaders raises the spectre of an exile even more terrible - another destruction of the temple and a permanent exclusion from God's eschatological kingdom (*cf* Matthew 21:18-25:46). Furthermore we have seen that Matthew's interest in the exile is not restricted only to particular formula quotations, but can be detected across the full gamut of his use of the Old Testament. It is of course not the only component to Matthew's use of the Old Testament, but it is a significant one. In this section we turn our attention to the remaining formula quotations⁸⁶ and ask whether what we have detected thus far is true for the majority of the formula quotations. This will enable us then to draw some final conclusions regarding exile, restoration and Matthew's use of the Old Testament.

He shall be called a Nazarene (Matthew 2:23)

The difficulty in interpreting Matthew 2:23 is aptly described by Rudolf Pesch: 'This quotation is ...problematic' (1994:128). That it certainly is, but not insoluble ! Understandably,

⁸⁶ The formula quotations which have not yet received our attention are Matthew 2:23 (*cf* Isaiah 11:1, Judges 13:5); Matthew 8:17 (*cf* Isaiah 53:4); Matthew 12:21 (*cf* Isaiah 42:1-4); Matthew 13:35 (*cf* Psalm 78:2); Matthew 27:9-10 (*cf* Zechariah 11:13).

a number of proposals have been made.⁸⁷ In my opinion, the solution to the interpretation of the verse lies in a combination of insights.

First, a number of commentators point out that in this formula quotation Matthew's use of the plural προφητῶν implies that Matthew does not have a specific Old Testament passage in mind, but the overall tenor of prophetic insight. According to Gundry (1982:39-40), this is further supported by the fact that ὅτι, present in Matthew 2:23, is absent from the other formula quotations in Matthew, each of which contains direct speech, whereas it is present in Matthew 26:54 where it introduces an indirect statement (1982:39-40). The sense of 2:23 could thus be obtained by translating: 'This was to fulfill what the prophets said about the fact that he would be called a Nazarene.'

Second, as far as the description of Jesus' as Ναζωραῖος is concerned I would suggest that we have here a case of *event prompting theological reflection*. The move to Nazareth, attested later in Matthew by the description of Jesus as 'Jesus of Nazareth' (cf Matthew 21:11, 26:71) not only requires clarification, but has prompted further reflection by Matthew on the significance of Jesus' person and work. To say as Stendahl does that Matthew 2 is 'totally focussed in its geographical names', albeit with apologetic concerns (1983:56-59), seems to me to be reductionistic⁸⁸ and to ignore the link between the naming in chapter 1 and that in chapter 2. The boy who is named 'Jesus' and called 'Immanuel' will also, in accordance with the prophetic witness, be called a 'Nazarene'. This suggests that the significance of Ναζωραῖος lies not in geography alone, but in the significance of Jesus' person and work. And, in my opinion, the two previous instances of naming give us a clue of that significance, for, as we noted in our discussion of Matthew's plot, the description of Jesus as Immanuel and as Saviour from sin

⁸⁷ See *inter alia* France (1981:233-51); Gundry (1982:37-41); Stendahl (1983:56-66); Davies and Allison (1988: 275-83); Luz (1989:141-51);

⁸⁸ One might well point out that even if one were to restrict the term Ναζωραῖος to a geographical reference, one must inevitably also connect it to the prophecy of Isaiah since Matthew's next reference to Nazareth comes in 4:12-16 where Matthew again employs a text from Isaiah to clarify the scope of Jesus ministry. And as we have already noted, Isaiah, who along with Jeremiah is the only prophet explicitly named in Matthew's formula quotations, is like the latter, a prophet of both exile and restoration *par excellence*. Cf the comments of Van Segbroeck (1965:371) that Matthew's reference to Jeremiah (or Isaiah) is not an attempt to 'refer in the first instance to a literary source, but rather to his theological source', i.e., the source reflecting his theological perspective.

evoke the entire narrative of which Isaiah 7:14 is a part. This narrative turns around twin themes - that of God's judgement on rebellious Israel and God's determination to preserve a remnant among his people, a stump from which a 'branch' (יִצְחָק - MT) will spring, a son of Jesse upon whom the Spirit of the LORD will rest, who will gather to himself the exiles of Israel and establish a righteous and glorious rule to the ends of the earth (Isaiah 11:1-16). This is clearly a depiction of a Davidic messiah who will restore his people from exile *ie* save his people from their sins and is thus a thoroughly appropriate designation of Jesus whom Matthew has already described in such terms in his gospel.⁸⁹

All the sick.. (Matthew 8:17; 12:17)

Although Matthew 8:17 and Matthew 12:17 draw from different parts of the book of Isaiah (Isaiah 53 and 42 respectively) and although they each make their own distinctive point about Jesus, they have in common first that they are both linked in particular to Jesus' ministry of exorcism and healing and second that they are the only places in Matthew's gospel where Jesus is explicitly identified with the Servant of the book of Isaiah.⁹⁰ Quite apart from the debate which has raged around the application of the figure of the Servant to Jesus which we touched on in our discussion of Matthew's plot,⁹¹ one is struck by Matthew's application of the servant image, particularly that of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53, to Jesus the healer and exorcist. But here again the well known maxim of reading texts within their context is of importance.

First, we note that while Matthew 8:17 follows a ministry of healing and exorcism which quite

⁸⁹ See Davies & Allison (1988:275-81) who see Isaiah 11:1 as a 'secondary allusion', preferring the idea of the Nazarite (נָזִיר) and a possible reference to Isaiah 4:3 where there is again a reference to the remnant who will be holy, depicting the Nazerite vow, and to a branch of the LORD which will be beautiful and glorious. Against this we point out that despite Mark's linkage of Nazareth and 'Holy one of God' (Mark 1:24) Matthew does not actually ever refer to Jesus by this designation, despite having Mark's usage at his disposal. Furthermore, it is by no means clear - indeed it is doubtful - whether the reference to the Branch in Isaiah 40:2 has the Messiah in view. It is more likely a reference to the remnant as a whole, the holiness in vs 3 thus being a reference to the divine election by which the remnant is preserved (*cf* 1 Kings 19:18).

⁹⁰ For the implicit identification of Jesus with the servant in Matthew 3:17 and 20:28, see our discussion of the plot of Matthew's gospel.

⁹¹ The legitimacy of Matthew's identification of Jesus with the Servant of the LORD in Isaiah, while a matter of debate among scholars, was clearly an accepted fact within the early church (see e.g. Luke 22:37; Acts 8:30-35; 1 Peter 2:21-24). See further our discussion of plot and the bibliography cited there.

clearly is comprehensive in scope (καὶ πάντα τοὺς κακῶς ἔχοντας ἐθεράπευσεν), it is preceded 'by a collection of healings for those who were *ritually* impure or unclean, showing that Jesus' ministry removed the humanly erected distinctions 'that ostracize certain kinds of people from the love of God and from fellow humans' (Blomberg 2001:13 *cf* Gundry 1967:230). In addition to this, we note that although Matthew has interposed material between the account of the healing of the leper and the forgiveness of the paralytic (*cf* Matthew 8:1-9:17 and Mark 1:40-2:22), the basic thrust of Mark's presentation of Jesus as the one who has authority over sickness, evil spirits, nature and even over sin is maintained, as is the theme of conflict with the religious leaders which this authority of Jesus provoked. What this means is that Matthew's application of Isaiah 53 to Jesus' healing ministry and exorcism should not be separated from the other aspects of his authority, including his authority over sin. Indeed, I would argue that both Jesus' healing ministry and his forgiveness of the paralytic and calling of Matthew (another outsider) are in fact *proleptic* in the sense that they point forward to what will be achieved at the cross and in the resurrection and are anticipations of the coming of the kingdom in its fulness. Seen against the background of Isaiah 50 - 55 they are in fact various facets of that promise of comfort and peace promised by the bearers of the good news of an end to the exile and restoration for all who will trust in the Lord.

Second, we note that although Matthew 12:17 again links Jesus' healing ministry and the ministry of the Servant of the LORD, the purpose of the quotation is really to justify Jesus' instruction that those who have been healed should not disclose that Jesus was the healer (*cf* Matthew 12:16). The immediate explanation for this enjoined silence is the plot of the Pharisees in Matthew 12:14, but Jesus' command here can surely not be isolated from similar commands in 8:4; 9:30; 16:20 and 17:9. It is particularly Matthew 16:20 which gives the clearest clue to Jesus' attitude. It is not merely the recognition of the Messiahship of Jesus which lies at the heart of Jesus' mission but also *what kind* of Messiah he actually is. And the kind of Messiah that Jesus is, even during the period of public acclaim and popularity as depicted in Matthew 8:17 and 12:17, is essentially a Suffering Servant - one who though called, equipped and sent by God (Isaiah 42:1) will not compel any to come in (Isaiah 42:2). The nett result of this is that the weak and the frail (the outsiders like the tax collectors and the gentiles) will find themselves included purely because they asked, but those who ought to have known better will be left outside, thanks to their own refusal to come in. Jesus the Messiah sows the word (Matthew 13) both in his own

person and through his emissaries (Matthew 10) but the results of the sowing are very mixed. Matthew's explanation for this is that Israel in Jesus' day suffers from the same spiritual malaise that marked the generation of the exile (Matthew 13:13-15). And Jesus' response to this malaise is to teach in parables and to adopt the form of one who is 'meek and lowly' (Matthew 11:29), so that it is only those to whom the Father is disclosing the secret of the kingdom (Matthew 11:25, 13:11), who will see him for who he really is and follow him accordingly.⁹² In this he is not unlike Isaiah whose own message seemed to fall on deaf ears (Isaiah 53:1) nor unlike the other prophets who suffered rejection at the hands of the very people they were sent to serve (*cf* Matthew 23:37).⁹³

Everything in Parables..(Matthew 13:35)

In Matthew 13:34-35 the evangelist, for the second time in the so-called Parable Discourse,⁹⁴ seeks to clarify Jesus' use of parables in his dealings with the crowd. Verse 34 is clearly an echo of Mark 4:33-34 (*cf* Luz 2001:265; Davies & Allison 1993:424-25) while the formula quotation in vs 35 replaces Mark's κατ' ἰδίαν δὲ τοῖς ἰδίοις μαθηταῖς ἐπέλυεν πάντα. The effect of this redaction is not as has sometimes been suggested to strengthen the role of Matthew 13:35 as a crucial turning point in Jesus' dealings with Israel (Rothfuchs 1969 *cf* Gundry 1982:269-71; Davies & Allison 1993:424) but rather to underline the fact that the use of parables in Jesus'

⁹² Davies & Allison (1991:323-24) admirably answer those such as Strecker ([1962] 1971) and Lindars (1961) who deny any significant connection between the quotation and the context. Their conclusion is worth quoting in full: 'All in all, the entirety of Mt 12.18-21 serves Matthean themes very well. Nothing is superfluous; everything fits. Matthew has evidently latched onto Isa.42:1-4 because it serves so remarkably to illustrate the nature of Jesus' ministry in Israel. Jesus is the unobtrusive servant of the LORD. God's Spirit rests upon him. He does not wrangle or quarrel or continue useless strife. He seeks to avoid self-advertisement and to quite the enthusiasm that his healings inevitably create. He has compassion upon all, especially the 'bruised reed' or 'smoldering wick.' And he brings salvation to the Gentiles'

⁹³ Does this theme of rejection, made explicit in both Isaiah and Jeremiah provide a second clue (see note 88 above) for Matthew's practice of naming only these two prophets in his formula quotations. See further Knowles (1993).

⁹⁴ Those such as Lohr who perceive a chiastic use the narrative / discourse alternation as a clue to the structure of Matthew's gospel, understandably view Matthew 13 as a key chapter for understanding the overall message of Matthew's gospel as indeed do those who see Matthew 13:35 as a key turning point in Jesus' relationships with Israel on the one hand and the disciples on the other. That such a turning point is present with regard to the parable discourse itself is clear (*cf* Davies & Allison 1993:424). That it should be viewed as a fulcrum for the gospel as a whole as suggested e.g. by Rothfuchs (1969) remains in my opinion a doubtful assertion (see note 27 above).

dealings with the crowd is an entirely appropriate course of action. In this way Matthew thus strengthens through his quotation of Psalm 78:2 the point he has already made by quoting Isaiah 6, a fact which may well have led to confusion regarding the source of the quotation.⁹⁵

That this is indeed the case can be seen by looking more closely at the context of Psalm 78:2, despite the comment by Davies and Allison (1993:426) that ‘Matthew was attracted to Psa. 78.2 by the phrase ‘in parables.’ That he paid much attention to the verse’s broader context is *not manifest* and it could be claimed that in this verse Matthew has misused the Old Testament [italics mine].’ The Psalmist, adopting the didactic techniques of the sage, extends an invitation to ‘his people’ to ‘hear and to listen’ (Psalm 78:1).⁹⁶ In this he is emulated by Jesus who repeatedly urges the people and his own disciples to listen carefully (Matthew 13:9, 18, 43). What the Psalmist then proclaims, is the story of Israel, a story from of old - the story of exodus and conquest and oppression - a story of God’s good and gracious rule (God as the shepherd of his people) and of Israel’s failure to listen to God’s words or submit to his rule (Israel as a stubborn and rebellious generation whose hearts were not loyal to God), a story whose resolution seems to be found in the raising up of a king after God’s own heart and the building of a sanctuary on Mt Zion. What is striking is that the Psalmist should refer to this act of re-telling the story of God’s kingship and its establishment in the Davidic king as a ‘parable’ and as something ‘hidden’. Both of these terms seem to echo the principle of Deuteronomy 29:29 - what is hidden belongs to God, but what is revealed belongs to Israel so that they would keep God’s law. How can what has manifestly been revealed be like something hidden and secret? The answer lies in the failure of Israel to hear, for if a people will not listen, as happened in the wilderness (*cf* Psalm 95), then even what is revealed becomes a mystery for it is neither understood nor obeyed.

What Matthew is thus saying both by his use of Isaiah 6 and by his use of Psalm 78:2, which acts as a link to the entire Psalm and its description of Israel as a ‘stubborn and rebellious generation’ (Psalm 78:8 *cf* Matthew 12:39, 45), is that was true of Israel throughout their past history is

⁹⁵ Luz (2001:265) *contra* Metzger (1975:33) opts for the reading of Sinaiticus and others MSS as well as Eusebius and Jerome that the formula should read ‘through the prophet Isaiah’ (see note 26 above) While it is true that the more difficult reading seems the more likely, Matthews already noted knowledge of Chronicles in which Asaph is called a prophet (1 Chronicles 25:2; 2 Chronicles 29:30) and the possibility of thematic unity with Isaiah 6 leading to a later emendation of the original argue for the exclusion of Isaiah’s name.

⁹⁶ Note Hosea 14:9 where a similar technique is used with regard to Israel’s story.

manifestly also true in Jesus own day. Jesus is in effect telling the story of the kingdom of God and its manifestation in his person and work. However many of his hearers simply listen but do not understand (Matthew 13:19) or understand only superficially and fail to live fruitful lives (vs 20-22). What should be plain for any with ears to hear, has become a mystery so that even those who have something, those to whom the secret of the kingdom has been given, must needs ask if they are to receive more. For those however who do not listen to what they hear and who do not seek understanding, even the little they have will be taken away. To them the one who has come to proclaim God's ancient works, becomes no more than a peddler of mysteries.⁹⁷

Behold your King... (Matthew 21:5)

Of the formula quotation in Matthew 21:5, Davies and Allison, quoting Soares Prabhu (1976:158) say with deceptive simplicity 'Matthew's 'deliberate, *ad hoc*, targumizing translation' makes explicit Mark's allusion to Zechariah 9.9. It also makes plain that Jesus was what he demanded others to be, namely meek' (1997:118) (*cf* Matthew 5:5; 11:29 - see also Gundry 1982:409). Closer investigation reveals however that there is in fact far more to this quotation than first meets the eye, quite apart from the apparent contradiction regarding the number of animals.⁹⁸ The words of the quotation which are simply ascribed to the prophet are most likely a conflation of Isaiah 62:11 and Zechariah 9:9. Furthermore, Matthew has omitted from Zechariah 9:9 the words 'saviour' and 'righteousness', words which we would hardly have expected him to omit. In the light of these observations, the following should be noted:-

First, although the formula quotations do usually look back to what precedes them as the phrase

⁹⁷ It is interesting that Matthew renders the Hebrew 'from of old' as 'since the creation of the world'. This could of course merely reflect the way in which the Psalm was interpreted within the tradition of the early church, but it is clearly consistent with Matthew's tendency to extend God's saving works beyond Israel's boundaries, both geographical and temporal.

⁹⁸ I remain unpersuaded both by claims that Matthew simply misread Zechariah 9:9 due to his apparent inability to detect Hebrew parallelism (an extraordinary claim about one who so often translates independently) or that he was assimilating the narrative to present Jesus as a Moses like figure in the light of Exodus 4:19-20 - so Davies & Allison (1997:121). Dare one suggest that the solution is more simple? Matthew preserves the Markan tradition that the foal is hitherto unbroken and simply records the very understandable fact that for Jesus to actually make the journey, the colt would have to be led alongside of its mother, whose side it would never have left (*cf* Gundry 1982:409). In the light of this event then, Matthew once more applies a conflation of Old Testament texts (Isaiah 62:11 and Zechariah 9:9). And it is in this use of the texts that the true significance of the events is found.

Τοῦτο δὲ γέγονεν makes clear, it is not necessary to restrict the formula quotation to ‘Jesus instructing the two disciples to get the donkey and the colt’ so that ‘the emphasis stays..on Jesus’ authoritative command’ (Gundry 1982:408). The entire section from 21:1-11 has the entry into Jerusalem in view as the phrase ‘riding on a donkey’ in the quotation suggests. In this way the narrator prepares the reader for what follows in the passion narrative - the one who by his own prediction is to die in Jerusalem is indeed Israel’s true king, not merely on the basis of popular acclaim (Matthew 21:9-11), but by divine design. One function of the formula quotation is therefore to re-affirm for the reader that both Jesus’ person and his impending passion are in accordance with God’s revealed will both for Jesus himself and for Israel.

Second, it is clear both from the Zechariah 9 itself and from Matthew’s application of Zechariah to Jesus’ mode of entry into Jerusalem that the *meekness* of Jesus is an important theme at this point in Matthew’s narrative.⁹⁹ The reality of meekness as a characteristic of Jesus’ in addition to its being a characteristic of the citizens of God’s kingdom (*cf* Matthew 5:5) was introduced by Matthew in the midst of Jesus’ controversy with the religious leaders (Matthew 11:29). Here in 21:5 it reinforces the fundamental duality which lies at the heart of Jesus’ messianic vocation. *Meekness* is not the sole interest of Zechariah 9:9 as quoted by Matthew. *Royalty* and *authority* are present as well, as is made clear, first, by the fact that Jesus’ instructions are followed to the letter and his requirements met without objection and, second, by the inclusion of the phrase ‘See your *king* comes to you’ (Matthew 21:4b) prior to the reference to meekness. This image of a *meek king* is in accordance with Matthew’s presentation elsewhere of Jesus as the Servant King e.g at the baptism. Taken together with Matthew’s replacement of the initial words of Zechariah 9 with words from Isaiah 62, it raises the question of whether the description *triumphal entry* is entirely appropriate for what was at best a mixed response to Jesus.

Third, Matthew’s replacement of the invitation in Zechariah 9:9a (‘Rejoice O Daughter of Zion’) with Isaiah 62:11 (‘Say to the Daughter of Zion’) is entirely appropriate given Jerusalem’s potential blindness (*cf* Matthew 13:13-15) and Jesus’ ongoing concern for Jerusalem (Matthew 23:37). What Jerusalem must do is to open its eyes and to see who Jesus really is, *viz* Israel’s

⁹⁹*Cf* Moo (1983:178); Davies & Allison (1997:119).

king, even when he hangs upon a cross (cf Matthew 27:32-56).¹⁰⁰ The fact that Matthew omits Zechariah's reference to the coming king as one who is a 'righteous saviour', key words within Matthew's gospel, is no difficulty precisely because they are Matthew's key words. Matthew has already established that Jesus is the both the beloved Son and righteous Servant of God who has come to save his people from their sins and bring their exile to an end. What he needs to reiterate at this point is that this 'saviour' who comes to redeem his people (Isaiah 62:11), does so through *meekness* not *warfare* (cf Zechariah 9:10). The aim of the quotation is thus also to invite the reader to see this truth afresh or perhaps, in the case of some, for the first time.¹⁰¹

Fourth, the fact of Matthew's use of Zechariah is in itself striking, especially in connection with our interest in the theme of exile and restoration within Matthew's gospel. The book is set during the reign of King Darius (1:1, 7:1) (circa 520 BC) and, put in slightly simplistic terms, has the end of the exile and the establishment of the kingdom of God in view (7:2-8:23). The later oracles collected in chapters 9-14 show however that the matter of Israel's restoration will not be as simple as might have been hoped or expected.¹⁰² What was begun under Zerubbabel and Joshua the high priest, will only be brought to completion on the day of the LORD, a day when the sins of God's people will be dealt with decisively and when the LORD's chosen shepherd will be struck and his sheep scattered, only to be gathered again by the LORD himself to share his glorious rule forever. It is to these oracles that our text belongs and it is with them in mind that Matthew applies the words of Zechariah to Jesus who as Israel's shepherd was struck (Matthew 26:31) and yet who gathered his scattered sheep under his glorious rule (Matthew 28:10-20) thus bringing an end to their exile.

¹⁰⁰ In this connection the preceding account of the healing of the two blind men has an interesting function within Matthew's narrative. The two men, though physically blind, recognize Jesus as the Son of David and show remarkable tenacity in their appeal to him. The result is that they receive their physical sight and respond in terms characteristic of disciples - they 'follow Jesus.' Mark in his account of the healing intensifies the significance of this following by adding ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ. But even in Matthew the reader is well aware that the Jesus whom they follow is on the way to Jerusalem where he will serve by giving his life as a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28). What Jesus gave to the physically blind - the gift of sight - is what the prophet desires for Jerusalem in the spiritual realm, the opening of eyes to see that Jesus the meek king is indeed the true king of the Jews.

¹⁰¹ This comment of course raises questions about the purpose of Matthew's gospel, a question to which a variety of answers have been given. We will return to this matter in the concluding chapter of the thesis.

¹⁰² Cf also Zechariah 7:5, Jeremiah 29:10-14 and Daniel 9:1-27 and the message of the so-called post-exilic books such as Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai and Malachi which see the restoration as incomplete and introduce the idea of a more complete restoration on the future day of the LORD.

We begin our discussion of this final and in many ways most complex of Matthew's formula quotations by quoting Douglas Moo's excellent summary statement. After a careful and detailed investigation of text form and Matthean redaction Moo concludes: 'The formula quotation is therefore built up from several OT elements: the foundation and essential structure is provided by phrases drawn from (Zechariah 11:13), but the mention of the field provides an important 'remodelling' of the quotation based on the Judas tradition and with reference to Jeremiah 19, while the concluding phrase adds a 'decorative motif', drawn from the traditional 'obedience formula'¹⁰³ Jeremiah is mentioned in the introductory formula because Jeremiah was the least obvious reference, yet the most important from the point of view of the application of the quotation' (1983:197-198). We note the following:

First, as far as the 'foundation and essential structure' is concerned, it is clear from Matthew's application of Zechariah 11:13 that the 'him' of Matthew's quotation is a reference to Jesus who was betrayed by Judas rather than to the betrayer himself. Matthew is, at this point, likening Jesus to the prophet Zechariah who shepherded the ungrateful flock on behalf of the LORD, only to discover that they preferred *false shepherds* to the *true shepherd* and were willing to pay thirty pieces of silver to get rid of the latter. Furthermore, although the money paid to Judas came from the coffers of the chief priests and elders (Matthew 27:3), Matthew holds the whole nation and not only the leaders responsible. He thus describes the price of betrayal as being set ἀπὸ υἱῶν Ἰσραήλ which while designating the nation's representatives, implicates the flock¹⁰⁴ who prefer the guidance of false shepherds (viz the religious leaders) to that of the true shepherd Jesus.

Second, while the reference to Jeremiah 19 is probably the primary one because, as Davies and Allison point out, 'Jeremiah 18-19 concerns a potter (18.2-6, 19.1), a purchase (19.1), the valley of Hinnom (where the Field of Blood is traditionally located, 19.2), 'innocent blood' (19.4), and

¹⁰³ The term 'obedience formula' for the stereotypical καθὰ συνέταξέν μοι κύριος is Moo's rendering of Rudolph Pesch's *Ausführungsformel*. See Moo (1983:197 notes 1 -3).

¹⁰⁴ This *contra* those who like Gundry (1982:557) take ἀπὸ as a strictly partitive rendering of מֵעֲלֵיהֶם. Note it is the price, not the payers, which is taken from among the sons of Israel.

the renaming of a place for burial' (1997:569), it is probably also correct (*contra* Moo 1983 and Gundry 1982:558) to include Jeremiah 32:6-15 which tells of the purchase of a field with silver (*cf* Davies & Allison 1997:569; Knowles 1993:75). But what of the ascription of the quote to Jeremiah rather than to Zechariah? Here it is, in my opinion, worth re-iterating the point made by van Segbroeck (1965:371) and echoed by Soares Prabhu (1976:54), that it is Jeremiah as a 'theological source' which Matthew has in mind. The principle point of the formula quotation is not the betrayal price, nor yet the field, but the terrible threat of judgement against a people who 'because they were stiff-necked ...would not listen' (Jeremiah 19:15) to the LORD's words, not now merely in the mouth of a rejected prophet as Jeremiah was (Jeremiah 18:18-23), but in the mouth of the Messiah himself. These terrible words, once in the mouth of Jeremiah, are now found in the mouth of Jesus and predict an exile more terrible than any that had gone before (Matthew 24:1-51) for those who refuse to be acknowledge the one who truly comes in the name of the Lord (Matthew 23:37-39).

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, we return to Senior's claim that 'the formula quotations in fact make explicit a theological perspective that emerges in several ways throughout the gospel', a theological perspective in which 'Matthew asserts that the person and mission of Jesus 'fulfils' the plan or promise of God expressed in the Hebrew scriptures' (1997b:104). Through our investigation of the relevant scholarship and Matthew's own usage, we have found this claim to be substantially true. But what exactly do we mean when we assert that 'Jesus fulfils the plan or promise of God expressed in the Hebrew scriptures'? What plan or promise of God is in fact in view. A variety of answers have been given which is hardly surprising given the multiplex nature of the witness of the Old Testament and the rich variety of ways in which Matthew describes Jesus' person and mission. Our discussion can thus rightly be said to have only scratched the surface of the subject.¹⁰⁵ What we have discovered, however, is that one *significant but largely neglected aspect of Matthew's theological perspective concerns Jesus as the one who fulfils the promise of an end to the exile*. What the significance of such a claim about Jesus' person and work might have been

¹⁰⁵ To illustrate this point we can note that although we have made mention of *wisdom themes* in our discussion of the Sermon on the Mount and Jesus role as the one greater than Solomon, the rich variety of ways in which Jesus embodies wisdom have not been noted at all.

in Matthew's day we have yet to explore. But that Matthew is deeply interested in texts which promise an end to Israel's exile and the consequent opening up of God's kingdom for all the nations seems to me to be beyond doubt. And it is the awareness of this fact which enables the interpreter to cast fresh light on familiar texts and more light on those which are less well known, or to use the words of another, 'to bring out treasures old and new'.

Chapter 6. Exile and Restoration: Old Testament¹ and Early Jewish Conceptions

1. Introduction

That a title like *Exile and Restoration: Old Testament and Early Jewish Conceptions* seems more appropriate to a major monograph² than to a chapter of a doctoral dissertation, can be argued on the basis of the extensive nature of the primary sources alone, not to mention the vast amount of secondary literature which has grappled with various aspects of the subject. That the topic cannot be ignored in the course of our discussion of exile, restoration and the interpretation of Matthew's gospel is however clear. The task of the New Testament interpreter is not merely a descriptive task, an attempt to answer the question 'what does the text say?' It is also concerned with the matter of significance and must therefore pursue the question 'why does the text say what it says in the way that it says it?' Why indeed did Matthew write his gospel?³ And why, as far as our field of investigation is concerned, did he pay significant attention (both explicit and implicit) to the themes of exile and restoration? Put in different terms, what would the impact of Matthew's treatment of the themes of exile and restoration as part of his 'gospel for a new

¹ Although it is now common to use the terminology *Hebrew Bible* rather than Old Testament, the latter use has been retained except in quotation or where the context demands otherwise. The reasons for this are, first, whereas I recognize that the phrase Old Testament as a title for the Hebrew Bible is a distinctively Christian usage, though one unknown in the *New Testament*, I am writing from within precisely that tradition and so it seems unnecessarily pedantic to avoid the terminology. It is used thus without intentional insult to members of the Jewish community for whom these scriptures are the Hebrew Bible. Second, because our study will at times include references to Old Testament theology as a discipline, it will be unnecessarily convoluted to alternate between the terms Old Testament in relation to scholarship and Hebrew Bible when the scriptures are meant. (On the question of Old Testament theology as a distinctively *Christian* activity see Lemke 1992:469-70).

² The title is in fact based upon a recent collection of essays entitled *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish and Christian Conceptions* (See Scott 1997a). This collection of essays is indicative of a renewed interest in the question of the exile from both a historical and sociological as well as a biblical theological perspective. See also Wright (1992, 1996); Grabbe (1998); Newman (1999).

³ A survey of commentaries and monographs *inter alia* displays a variety of answers regarding the question of the *purpose* of Matthew's gospel. These answers can be grouped together under one of three major categories *viz* Theological, Ecclesiological and Sociological. In real terms of course these categories are more fluid since Matthew's Christological statements for example can be shown to have relevance both for catechesis and the legitimization of the Matthean communities. Furthermore it is unlikely that a work as multiplex in both form and content as Matthew's gospel would have only *one* discernable purpose (*cf* France 1989:119-22).

people’⁴ have been?’⁵ The answer to this question is of course not straightforward, for it depends on one’s ability to reconstruct the particular sociological make-up of the Matthean communities and their peculiar circumstances at the time that the gospel was written, a reconstruction which is by no means easy to do (see Stanton 1992b:380-82). The difficulties notwithstanding, my own sentiments lie, as noted in passing earlier,⁶ with those who see the Matthean communities as *Jewish-Christian*, still in dialogue with but not part of the wider Jewish community among whom they lived.. This fact seems to me, among other arguments, to be the only real explanation for Matthew’s profound interest in the Old Testament and his strong theology of fulfilment with regard to both the Person and Work of Jesus. And it is this fact, which is thus part of the motivation for our investigation into Old Testament and early Jewish conceptions of exile and restoration, such as they were. It seems to me to be reasonable to assume that the thinking of early Jewish-Christian communities, whether Palestinian or Diaspora, would have been shaped, *inter alia*, by both the Hebrew scriptures and the appropriation and interpretation of these scriptures as reflected in the Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha and Targums.⁷

But there is a second reason why I have included this chapter on Old Testament and early Jewish conceptions of exile and restoration as part of our discussion of Matthew’s own understanding of this theme. This reason has to do with the fact that Wright (1992,1996), whose comment that the exile is ‘crucial’ for Matthew (1992:386) was, as noted earlier, part of the catalyst for my own investigations, works from the premise that, despite the very real diversity within early Judaism, the vast majority of Jews of that period, both Palestinian and Diaspora, if asked, ‘where are we?’ would have answered: ‘we are still in exile’ (Wright, 1992:243). This view, which as we noted

⁴ While this question does not deny the value of asking what impact Matthew’s gospel may have on a particular contemporary audience or readership, it does affirm my own commitment to the importance of Matthew’s original target audience and readership - the *new people* for whom he wrote his *gospel* to borrow Stanton’s apt title for his work. That such an original audience and readership existed is beyond question, whatever dispute there may be regarding the extent to which the exact make-up of such readership and audience can be constructed on the basis of redaction criticism (Matthew’s communities) or narrative criticism (the implied reader).

⁵ The kinds of questions generated by an enquiry into the reception of Matthew’s gospel by its original readers are well summarised by Stanton (1992b:379).

⁶ See the conclusion of Chapter 2: *Genealogy*. See also the further discussion in Chapter 7.

⁷ For a helpful discussion of *story*, *praxis* and *symbol* as the so-called component parts of a world-view, see Wright (1992:215-43).

earlier, continues to provoke discussion and dispute, is argued at length by Wright and, as we shall see later, is adopted by Pate (2000) and defended by Evans (1999:77-100). Given my own ignorance of the Pseudepigrapha, Apocrypha and the writings of the Qumran community in general and their perspective on the question of the exile and restoration of Israel in particular, I was constrained to work through at least a representative number of these texts to evaluate Wright's claims for myself. This has inevitably led to a more descriptive and discursive style than in earlier chapters. As a guide for my reading of these texts, I have tried to draw on standard works such as Charlesworth (1983) and Stone (1984). As far as the treatment of the themes of exile and restoration within the Old Testament are concerned, I have adopted a descriptive Biblical-Theological approach, using the 6th century BC exile to Babylon and the return under Zerubbabel and texts which refer to, explain or evaluate this exile and return as a starting point for my thinking, but then expanding my view to what I later refer to as 'the theological concept of exile' which, from a biblical-theological point of view, encapsulates not merely the notion of land lost or regained, but the more fundamental concepts of 'rest in the presence of the LORD' or exclusion from his presence with the concomitant idea of restlessness. I trust that the ensuing discussion, will serve to further clarify what is meant, in each context, by the terms exile and restoration.

2. Exile, Restoration and the Old Testament.

2.1. Introduction

Two preliminary difficulties face the person seeking to investigate the themes of exile and restoration within the Old Testament. Both questions are to a degree methodological and are as such dependent, at least in part, upon the philosophical and scholarly *milieu* within which the investigation takes place. Both involve questions about *history* and *theology* and the relationship between the two. Both warrant (and have in differing degrees received) extensive and specialist discussion. They are raised here with due deference to my specialist colleagues, more with a view to awareness than resolution.

The *first* difficulty concerns the *historicity* of the exile to and in particular, the restoration from

Babylon, of the southern kingdom of Judah in the early and late 6th century BC respectively, i.e. Jeremiah's 70 years of exile (*cf* Jeremiah 29:10). Did such an exile actually take place, at least on any significant scale so as to warrant the term 'exile'⁸? Is there any evidence of a significant return to the land at the end of the Babylonian kingdom as we are led to believe from the writings of the Chronicler? This is not just a question of detailed precision about dates and the persons involved. It is a basic question about whether or not it is appropriate to speak of *the* exile and *the* return⁹ in any objective historical way as opposed to seeing exile and restoration as a mere literary construct. Such questioning is not new¹⁰, but it has in recent time received new momentum.¹¹ Of course, concerning the formative nature of the exile along with the exodus in the narrative and rhetoric of the Old Testament (and indeed in its theological orientation) there

⁸ It is very difficult as a Christian student of the Old Testament to take Robert Carroll's comments regarding the use of exile in the title of a book or research proposal seriously. He declares that the use of the term *exile* in title by 'members of the Guild of Biblical Studies', is 'to connive at, conspire or collaborate with the biblical text in furthering the myth represented by the ideological shaping of biblical history. It is the taking of an ancient Jerusalem-orientated point of view by writers who are twentieth-century scholars as if such a partisan position could be taken up by non-participants without involving considerable bad faith' (1998:66-67). Although he then goes on to argue the point in terms of the perception of those for whom life in the diaspora (as he prefers to call it) may not have been seen as exilic at all, the level of comment in his earlier statements is in my opinion inflammatory and quite contrary to the supposed spirit of the symposium to which he contributed (see Grabbe 1998:12-13). It is also, in my opinion, to claim too much for his own point of view for as Neusner, himself hardly a member of the Guild, has argued: 'The paradigm of exile and return contains all Judaisms over all times to the present.'

⁹ Becking (1998:46) observes that while 'it is impossible, from a methodological perspective, to deduce historical implications from...semantic and linguistic observations', the 'absence in classical Hebrew of a single term for the whole process of exile and return' and the fact that whereas *šûb* depicts the act of return, 'there is no Hebrew noun that expresses the idea of 'return'', nevertheless suggests that 'the idea of exile and return as continuous process was not yet a fixed idea in pre-Hellenistic times.' Such a view is unwarranted. Quite apart from methodological considerations, it can be argued in purely theological terms. First, since at least as far as the Deuteronomist was concerned, return was *conditional* upon repentance one would not expect the language to imply an automatic link between exile and return. Covenant promise was never intended as a basis for presumption in Israel. Second, the favourite language descriptive of return is קָבַץ (piel)-gather. The subject of the verb in this form is almost always Yahweh, and 'the majority of passages have to do with God's restoration of Israel to the Land of Promise' (NIDOTT 3:863 # 7695.3). The emphasis is thus on Yahweh's faithfulness rather than on Israel's repentance.

¹⁰ Lester L Grabbe (1998:11 note1) in introducing the discussion of whether or not in talking about the exile one is discussing 'historical event' or something which is nothing 'more than a literary and / or theological concept...an example of virtual reality' cites CC Torrey as the original 'doubter.' The works concerned are Torrey, C.C. 1910. *Ezra Studies*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press and 1954. *The Chronicler's History of Israel*. New Haven. Yale University Press. See also Barstad, H.M. 1996. *The Myth of the Empty Land: A Study in the History and Archaeology of Judah during the 'Exilic' Period*. Oslo: Scandinavian University Press.

¹¹ See the Papers and Responses of the Second European Seminar in Historical Methodology published in Grabbe (1998).

is no doubt. Thus Robert Carroll (1998:63) begins his rather provocatively titled essay *Exile ! What Exile?* with these words: 'Exile and exodus: those are the two sides or faces of the myth that shapes the subtext of the narrative and rhetoric of the Hebrew Bible. Between these twin topoi (and their mediating notion of the empty land) is framed, constructed and constituted the essential story of the Hebrew Bible.' Not that Carroll is overtly denying the reality of exile as event - he constantly uses qualified phrases like 'whether it [i.e. the exile] may be treated as an event in the real socio-economic historical world outside the text or not' and 'history notwithstanding (whether bogus, constructed or whatever)....It may have historical referents....' (1988:64). But his main point is to emphasise that 'it is as a root metaphor that it contributes most to the biblical narrative.' In this sense then, Carroll's article is indicative of those which seek to place the emphasis on 'narrative world' rather than 'real world' in dealing with the narrative of the Old Testament. To this the following brief response.

First, appropriate as such comments may be in the context of a Symposium dealing with the questions of Old Testament historiography, we may well question their validity in connection with the method of Old Testament theology. The question of the relationship between history and theology is in many ways a subset of the discussion about *history* and *revelation*. It is thus one of the classical issues with regard to the nature and method of Old Testament Theology. Whereas it is true that questions have been raised with regard to the adequacy of 'revelation through history' as a key-stone in Old Testament theology, it is probably also correct to question whether 'revelation through story' (at the expense of history) will prove adequate as a substitute. As Lemke (1992:469) quite correctly points out, while it is granted that 'not all the Biblical narratives can or should be read as history, many of them must and will continue to be read in this way.' This is not only because as readers we will inevitably bring historical consciousness to our reading of the Bible, but because 'Biblical religion is essentially historical in character.' It is the neglect of this fact that will in my opinion prove to be the Achilles-heel of many otherwise helpful 'literary approaches' to Old Testament interpretation.

Second, and closely related to the above, the stress on *literature* at the expense seemingly of *history* seems, in my opinion, to be a case of an unfortunate exclusivity in methodology. Surely as N.T. Wright (1992:31-144 *inter alia*) has argued so persuasively we are not forced to choose

between the Scilla of phenomenology on the one hand and the Charybdis of naive realism on the other. A critical realist epistemology and inclusive¹² method can enable us to be aware, both of our activity of reading and the nature of text on the one hand, and yet have appropriate¹³ access to 'event' in the public sphere. In any case, access to 'the exile' as event is underlined albeit in minimal terms by the fact as Becking (1998:42) rightly points out 'that it cannot seriously be denied that in the beginning of that century (6th BCE) inhabitants of Jerusalem and its vicinity were deported against their will to Babylonia' and 'it cannot seriously be denied that toward the end of the sixth century BCE persons from Babylonia started to move to an area under Persian administration called Yehud.' In making these assertions he cites both internal and external evidence. Thus while searching historical questions ought to encourage us to be less naive and more careful in the discussion of these matters and the interpretation of the texts, they do not warrant the abandonment either of traditional terminology or the endeavour as a whole.

The *second* difficulty concerns more directly the question of method in Old Testament theology,¹⁴ though it too has a historical component. Ever since the seminal work of Eichrodt and Von Rad, the pendulum has swung between so-called 'systematic-conceptual' (synchronic) and 'historical-genetic' (diachronic) approaches to method in Old Testament theology.¹⁵ Fundamental to this methodological issue, is the question of the possibility of an over-arching theology of the Old Testament and the related question of a centre (*Mitte*) for the Old Testament as a whole. But it also impacts the investigation of a particular theme such as exile and restoration within the Old Testament scriptures. In particular it is necessary to ask in what sense one can speak of an Old Testament theology of exile and restoration? Should the plural *theologies* not rather be used? And

¹² By 'inclusive method' here I am referring to a method of interpretation which seeks to take the literary, historical and theological dimension of hermeneutics seriously (*cf* Wright 1992:47-14).

¹³ By appropriate I mean access which is appropriate to the nature of the text on the one hand (i.e. is the text eg. poetry or prose - we would have different expectations of each wrt historical events) and also to the level of evidence on the other. In relation to the latter, see the measured comments of H.G.M. Williamson (1996:54) regarding the fate of Zerubbabel.

¹⁴ On the question of Old Testament theology as a distinctively *Christian* activity see Lemke (1992:469-70).

¹⁵ See Lemke (1992:452-468); Høgenhaven (1988:29-73).

what exactly is meant by the theology of the Old Testament - the theology contained in the Old Testament? That derived from the Old Testament? Or both? Quite apart from the issue of authority, we need to ask questions about the theological diversity within the Old Testament.¹⁶ However, although such a discussion about *unity*, *diversity* and the *historicality* of Old Testament themes is indeed the stock in trade of Old Testament theology and *Religionsgeschichte*, it is in fact not germane to our purposes. The purpose of our discussion of exile, restoration and the Old Testament is to attempt to understand the possible theological context for the treatment of this theme within the gospel of Matthew. Now the point is simply that whereas questions about unity and diversity regarding the theme of exile and restoration in the Old Testament may be of concern to present day Old Testament scholars, *no such concern would have occupied first century readers or hearers*.¹⁷ For Matthew the Old Testament was, quite simply 'the Scriptures' - certainly the 'Law and the Prophets' (e.g. Matthew 5:17; 7:12) and at least, as far as the third traditional division of the Hebrew scriptures is concerned, certain Psalms (e.g. Matthew 4:6 (Psalm 91); 13:35 (Psalm 78)). While there must of necessity be a wider scope to this theological context than that provided by the Old Testament scriptures - for example, the Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, and the documents of the Qumran Community - the Old Testament is foundational to all of these writings and indeed to Matthew's gospel as we have already noted in our discussion of Matthew's use of the Old Testament. Thus before any discussion of Matthew's view of exile and restoration occurs in relation to extant Jewish interpretations, one must, in my opinion, give full weight to the Old Testament presentation of the theme.¹⁸ To this we now turn, following for convenience, the traditional tripartite structure of the Hebrew Scriptures¹⁹ and with the barest reference to the many commentaries, monographs and articles

¹⁶ See *inter alia* Goldingay (1987).

¹⁷ It is of course a truism to point out that in the absence of a 'printed Bible' most Jews and Jewish Christians of Matthew's day would have been dependent upon the readings and exposition of the Scriptures which took place within the synagogues, at the festivals and/or in gatherings of the church. But that fact by no means negates the reality that within what was a manifestly diverse Judaism, one could still speak of a discernable world-view and system of fundamental beliefs and hopes. See Wright (1992:215-338).

¹⁸ This statement is of course not intended to present Matthew's work as if it occurred in a vacuum, independent of the prevailing Jewish or Christian views within the first century - quite the contrary. It is simply to assert the obvious and sometimes neglected fact that such views would themselves have been deeply influenced by the Hebrew scriptures extant at that time.

¹⁹ On the question of the so-called 'Old Testament *canon* of the New Testament Church' see *inter alia* Beckwith (1985); Ellis (1991:3-50); Sanders (1992:837-52); Vasholz (1996:460-64).

which discuss these themes in detail.

2.2. *Exile, Restoration and the Torah*

Although the reader of the Torah encounters the twin themes of exile and restoration explicitly with regard to the nation of Israel and the land of Canaan for the first time in Leviticus 26:27-45 (in the context of a discussion regarding the *Sabbaths* of the land) and in Deuteronomy 28:64-30:10 (in the context of the covenantal blessings and curses), Ian Duguid (2000:475) is surely correct when he says that ‘The expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden is the archetype of all subsequent exile (Gen. 3:24). Paradise has been lost because of their sin, and now they must live as strangers in a land from which they have become alienated (Gen. 3:17-19).’ The consequence of this, according to Duguid, is that ‘although the exile of Israel as a nation did not occur until relatively late in the OT period, the theological concept of exile is present virtually from the beginning of biblical revelation.’ Although spoken from a very different theological perspective, this point of view agrees substantially with that of Robert Carroll which we noted briefly in our introductory chapter (*cf* Carroll 1997a:64). Thus both Duguid and Carroll apply the *idea* of exile to a series of Biblical events such as Abraham’s wandering in the land of Canaan (*cf* Genesis 23:4), Jacob’s sojourn at the home of Laban (*cf* Genesis 28:13-15; 30:25), Joseph’s deportation from his homeland to Egypt as a result of the subterfuge of his brothers and the consequent removal from Canaan to Egypt of Jacob and his sons where their descendants later lived in bitter slavery and oppression (Genesis 15:13 *cf* Exodus 1:1-22) and last but not least, Israel’s forty year experience of wandering in the wilderness as a result of refusing to enter Canaan when they had been led to its borders after the Exodus. To repeat Carroll’s memorable statement, ‘the Hebrew Bible is the book of exile’ (1997a:64).

Now such a ‘theological concept of exile’ requires some basic definition especially since in the earlier narratives the language used to describe the nation’s exile in Leviticus and Deuteronomy and in the prophetic oracles is largely absent.²⁰ Duguid defines exile in ‘theological terms’ as ‘the

²⁰ The absence of terminology does not of course imply the absence of the idea itself. Some of the key terms used in Leviticus, Deuteronomy and the prophetic books are e.g. to scatter (Leviticus 26:33; Deuteronomy

experience of pain and suffering that results from the knowledge that there is a home where one belongs, yet for the present one is unable to return there', an 'existential sense of deep loss' which may 'be compounded by a sense of guilt or remorse stemming from the knowledge that the cause of exile is sin' (200:475). In my opinion such a definition majors far too much on 'the subjective', for as the early Biblical narratives already make clear, there is an 'objectivity' about the fact of exile which is prior to any subjective experience of pain or guilt in the wake of such exile. Thus in Genesis 3, it is not merely the pain or frustration which arises from the Fall, but the fact of *expulsion from the Garden with no automatic hope of return* which is the focal point of the narrative. The language is stark and violent (banish, drive out - Genesis 3:23-24) and the significance of this violent expulsion is underlined if one bears in mind the symbolism of the garden as the place where heaven and earth meet, the mountain top sanctuary where human beings are able to enjoy blessing and rest within the Divine presence (Genesis 2:4-17; cf Ezekiel 28:11-19).²¹ The reality of this point is driven home in a moving way in the plea of Cain in the wake of his murder of Abel his brother. In response to God's declaration 'Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground' (NIV), Cain responds that his punishment is 'more than he can bear', because it involves not only *being driven from the land* but also *the loss of the divine presence* and the *rest* which epitomises life in that presence (Genesis 4:14). Driven from the land, Cain becomes a restless wanderer upon the earth, the very *antithesis* of what humankind were meant to be viz at rest in the Presence of God.

What then, if anything, is the significance of these early manifestations of exile as far as the primary account of exile - the exile of Israel and Judah respectively - is concerned? In my opinion the answer lies in recognizing that Genesis 1-11 is not *mere* background to the story of the patriarchs and the nation of Israel. The call of Abram in Genesis 12:1-3 and the promise of a *land, a blessing, descendants* and a *great name* is as we have already noted elsewhere in our discussions not only for Israel's sake! It is for the benefit of 'all the families of the earth' (Genesis

28:64 cf e.g. Ezekiel 36:19) and to uproot (Deuteronomy 29:28 cf Jeremiah 45:4). Both the latter term and the idea of thrusting out found in Deuteronomy 29:28 evoke the sense of violence to which Carroll (1997a:64-65) refers as characteristic of the experience of exile as the Bible depicts it. For a discussion of some of the key terms such as 'exile' and 'captivity' used in the Deuteronomist, the Chronicler and prophetic books see Ross (1996:595-601).

²¹ See Dumbrell (1994:25); Wenham (1987:61); *contra* Hamilton (1990:161).

12:3) in order to bring about for them the creation purposes of rest and blessing which were forfeited as a result of human rebellion in the Garden. What was lost by humanity at large, is re-initiated in the history of Israel, not for its own sake but for the sake of the world. What humankind was offered by God in the garden - blessing and rest or better blessing *leading to rest* - is now offered to Abraham's descendants, Israel. Like humanity, Israel are formed and created in the Exodus / Sinai events (*cf* Isaiah 43:1, 7) and like humanity, God gives to them the Eden-like sanctuary of the land (Exodus 15:17; Deuteronomy 1:25; 8:6-9; 11:8-12), where they are to have dominion as a royal priesthood (Exodus 19:5-6) and can enjoy blessing and rest (Exodus 33:14; Deuteronomy 3:20; 28:1-14). But the Divine Purpose within this is *mediatorial* - it is 'because the whole earth' belongs to God (Exodus 19:5) that Israel is chosen as a holy nation and royal priesthood (Exodus 19:6), modelling God's rule and its blessing to the surrounding nations (*cf* Deuteronomy 4:5-8) As Dumbrell (1984:89) correctly states: '....'for all the earth is mine' assumes the character of the major statement of vv 4-5 since it conveys the purpose for which Israel has been chosen. Such a concept would draw us back to the intent of the Abrahamic covenant which this section restates, namely that Israel is the agent used by God to achieve the wider purposes which the Abrahamic covenant entails, purposes which involve the redemption of the whole world'.²²

As with humanity however, the possibility of long life in the land for Israel is conditioned by obedience (Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 4:40). If Israel will obey the LORD and keep his covenant, then the land will indeed be a place of blessing and rest and Israel will be a blessing for the nations from among whom they have been chosen (Exodus 19:3-6; Deuteronomy 4:5-8). But if Israel refuse to submit to God's rule and break his covenant, then they will be driven out of the land just as rebellious humankind were driven from the Garden (Deuteronomy 4:25-29 *cf* Genesis 3:23-24). Israel would become a nation of restless wanderers, scattered among the nations, just as an earlier rebellious generation had failed to enter rest and had wandered for forty years in the wilderness (Psalm 45). This threatened expulsion of course raised questions about

²² I differ thus with those like Clines (1978:98) who suggest that for Israel 'Genesis 1-11 is not for them, as it is for us, universal history; it is their own history.' Even if one concedes the exilic origins of the Pentateuch, there is no need to see such a nationalistic perspective within Israel's self-understanding. Indeed such nationalism seems incongruous in the light of the clear universalism of e.g. Isaiah 40-66.

God's purpose to bless the nations through Israel, Abraham's seed. Had this purpose been abandoned or had Israel's role within the fulfilment of this purpose been forfeited? It is to the latter prophets that one must turn for any kind of extended reflection upon this important question. But there are hints of the answer already within the Torah. We note therefore that within both Deuteronomy and Leviticus, the warnings about future exile are followed by promises of restoration and a return to the land (Deuteronomy 30:1-5). The condition for this *return to the land* is a *return to the LORD* (Deuteronomy 4:30), but its basis is God's faithfulness to his ancient promises to the fathers (Leviticus 26:42; Deuteronomy 4:31), promises which as we have already seen, are for the sake of all the families of the earth. Thus the promise to the Patriarchs, which forms the key element within the overall narrative flow of the Pentateuch (*cf* Clines 1978:31-79),²³ continues for the generation of the exile and beyond to be the foundation of their future hope of restoration (*cf* Clines 1978:97-99), a fact which surely explains why the Torah was viewed as an integral unit within the Hebrew Bible, despite the obvious continuity between it and the narrative of the Former Prophets.

2.2. *Exile, Restoration and the Former Prophets.*

We have seen above that the literary theme of the Torah can thus be described in terms of the foundational promise to the Patriarchs - a promise of land, descendants and a blessing, a promise which found at least partial fulfilment, despite many obstacles, in God's provision of offspring for Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in God's providential dealings with the sons of Jacob in Egypt, in his rescue of Israel from bondage in Egypt, and finally in his providential and judicial leading of the nation through the wilderness until he brought a new generation to the very borders of the promised land to face the alternative of obedience, life and blessing or disobedience, a curse and destruction. When one turns to the Former Prophets, one is faced with the ultimate

²³ Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 3:1-10 and Deuteronomy 34:1-4 are three key *loci* within the overall literary structure of the Pentateuch. Each of these loci draws on key themes that have preceded it such as the references to the land and the promise to the patriarchs. In Exodus 3 and Deuteronomy 34 there are additional links with the person of Moses so that Exodus 3-Deuteronomy 34 forms one narrative arc. But both of these mention the promise to the patriarchs as foundational and are thus linked in turn to Genesis 12. Genesis 12 is in turn linked to the preceding narrative by the notion of blessing and a great name (*cf* The account of Babel in Genesis 11) so that as we have already mentioned the call of Abram and the ensuing story of the Pentateuch should be seen against the backdrop of God's purpose for humanity outlined in Genesis 1-11.

consequences of Israel's choice and with the tragic story of a land freely given but ultimately lost. And it is here that the reader is brought face to face with what is surely the key question posed by the narrative of Joshua to Kings, that is, the question *why?* - a question perhaps as pertinent as that concerning any future hope for a generation in exile reflecting, in the light of such a disaster, upon the story of a nation which claimed to be God's chosen people. Why did Israel lose the land they had been given by God himself? Had God proved himself incapable of keeping his promises, or was there another reason?

According to Martin Noth's classic essay, the answer to this question was provided within the so-called *Deuteronomistic History*²⁴, a *theological history* incorporating Deuteronomy to Kings and 'intended to teach the true meaning of the history of Israel from the occupation to the destruction of the old order' in which the Deuteronomist 'discovered...that God was recognizably at work in this history, continuously meeting the accelerating moral decline with warnings and punishments and finally, when these proved fruitless, with total annihilation' (Noth 1981:89). Noth's largely pessimistic assessment of the material from Joshua to Kings has some merit if one bears in mind the overall sweep of the narrative taken as a unit. Joshua begins as Deuteronomy had ended - with the land as promised and about to be given and with the assurance of God's presence with Joshua as the LORD had been with Moses (1:1-5). And the book ends with a positive assessment of the conquest and with the declaration that God for his part has kept his promises to Israel (23:1-14). But the book is by no means as naively positive about the conquest as is sometimes suggested, for it is well aware of Israel's sin (7:1-26) and potential folly (9:1-27) and, if anything, is more certain about the inevitability of the exile than either Leviticus 26 or Deuteronomy 28-29 (*cf* Joshua 23:14-24:27). This perspective is made even more clear by the book of Judges which acts as a foil to correct any possible triumphalistic attitude that may have been created by a superficial reading of Joshua. Israel's failure in total conquest and the LORD's severe response to Israel's policy of compromise and expediency (Judges 1:1-2:5) provide a backdrop against which the recurring cycle of *rebellion*, *judgement*, *grace* and *deliverance* is played out. The epilogue to the book (Judges 17-21) makes it clear that at the heart of Israel's

²⁴ Noth's study of the two great *theological histories* with the Old Testament corpus, the Deuteronomistic history and the work of the Chronicler was first published in 1943 under the title *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*. An English translation of the first section on the Deuteronomistic History was published in 1981 by Sheffield Academic Press, hereafter Noth (1981).

problem lies the same fundamental moral and spiritual unilateralism that characterised humankind's rebellion in the garden - 'everyone did as he saw fit' (17:4; 21:25 NIV).

But the book of Judges also raises the question of whether or not a new form of leadership, *viz* that of a king like the nations, could possibly resolve Israel's deepening spiritual plight. Despite appearances, the book of Judges together with the remainder of the Former Prophets answers the question in the negative. I thus concur with those who view the phrase 'in those days there was no king' as descriptive of the reality of the day, rather than as a commendation of kingship as the solution to Israel's woes.²⁵ The book of Judges itself makes this plain in the accounts of Gideon and Abimelech (8:22 -9:57) and although the later narrative in Samuel and Kings describes kingship as the *status quo* through which God's rule over Israel will be manifested, 1 Samuel 8:1-15:35 makes it clear that the desire for a king within Israel was in real terms a rejection of the reality of God's kingship over the nation. Indeed, as the later narrative shows, it was both the wickedness of the Kings and the refusal of the nation to listen to the word of the LORD in the mouth of his prophets which in the end led to the exile first of the Northern kingdom and then of Judah. And even where the king did walk in the ways of the LORD, the reforms which were instituted were at best outward and were incapable of dealing with the root of the problem *viz* the stubborn and rebellious hearts of the people.

It is however 2 Kings 17:7-23 that provides the clearest answer to the fundamental question posed within the Deuteronomistic history. Why did Israel and ultimately Judah go into exile and lose their land? The answer is because of rebellion against the LORD by both people and leaders and a stubborn refusal to listen to the prophetic call for covenant fidelity and to the prophetic warning of impending judgement in the absence of such fidelity. Here then we find four key elements of what Marvin Pate (2000:24) has referred to a 'the Deuteronomistic view of Israel's history',²⁶ *viz* (1) Israel's sin against the LORD (vs 7), (2) the role of the prophets in calling Israel

²⁵ See Dumbrell (1989:72-74) *contra* Mayes (1985:13-16).

²⁶ Pate is one of a growing number of scholars who have made use of the seminal work of Odil Steck (1967). In the introduction to his book, Pate describes Steck's work as 'programmatic' (Pate 2000:19 note 5). He lists a comprehensive bibliography of scholars who are following Steck's basic thesis that Second Temple Judaism viewed its history along the lines of the five-fold pattern - disobedience, prophetic warning, rejection of prophets, exile and restoration as evident e.g. in Baruch 1:15-3:8. See also Nickelsburg (1981); Wright (1992 1996); Knowles (1993).

back to the covenant (vs 13),²⁷ (3) Israel's stubborn refusal to listen to the prophets (vs 14-15) and (4) the consequent judgement of the nation in keeping with the threats expressed in Deuteronomy (vs 18-23). This seems to confirm Noth's pessimistic view of the Deuteronomist's perspective. In Noth's own words, the Deuteronomist 'saw the divine judgement that was acted out in his account of the external collapse of Israel as a nation as something final and definitive and he expressed no hope for the future, not even in the very modest and simple form of an expectation that the deported and dispersed people would be gathered together' (1981:97).

But is such a pessimistic view of the Deuteronomistic perspective justified? What are we to make of the appeal at the end of Solomon's prayer that the LORD will 'hear their prayer and their plea and uphold their cause...and forgive your people who have sinned against you; forgive all the offences they have committed against you and cause their conquerors to show them mercy' and a two-fold description of the fact that Israel are God's chosen people whom he brought out of Egypt (1 Kings 8:46-53). Surely such language reflects both the promise of Deuteronomy 30:1-10 and simply applies on a national scale what had been said in particular concerning the house of David in 2 Samuel 7.²⁸ God's promise to David was that 'Your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me' (2 Samuel 7:16), though this did not negate 'punishment' with 'the rod of men and with floggings inflicted by men' (vs 14). For the promise to David and his house to stand, the promise to Israel must stand as well, even though the nation like the king must undergo 'punishment' leading to repentance rather than destruction. Likewise the warnings of

²⁷ According to Deuteronomy 18:14-22, the prophetic movement within Israel had its roots in the Sinai experience. Israel's fear at hearing the 'voice of the LORD our God' and seeing 'this great fire' led to the request for a mediator, a spokesman on God's behalf who would mediate the word of the LORD to the nation. This request pleased the LORD (vs 17) and led to the promise of a prophet 'from among their brothers' into whose mouth the LORD would place his words (vs 18) and to whose word Israel would thus be subject (vs 19). This arrangement thus set the standard for the future prophetic orthodoxy with Moses himself as the so-called normative prophet, not merely because of his encounter with the word of Yahweh (vs 18) but because the covenant at Sinai of which Moses was the mediator, became the standard by which all prophetic utterance was to be judged and upon which the prophetic appeal to Israel was to be focussed (vs 20 *cf* Deuteronomy 13:1-5; 34:10-12). It was however with the advent of Samuel, who though a judge (1 Samuel 7:15-17) and apparently authorised to fulfill priestly functions (2 Samuel 7:1-11; 13:9-14), is cast primarily in the role of a prophet (1 Samuel 3:19-4:1), that the prophetic role within Israel takes on new significance. It is within Samuel's time as judge, priest and prophet that Israel demand and are given a king and it is particularly in relation to this new situation created by the advent of the monarchy that Samuel's role with relation to both the King and the nation are defined (1 Samuel 8:1-12:25; especially 12:20-25). It is this role of the prophet as guardian of the covenantal and theocratic ideal which is epitomised in the ministry of Elijah in 1 Kings 17-19 and reflected in the oracles of the so-called Latter prophets.

²⁸ *Cf* the very similar promise made with regard to the 'faithful priest' in 1 Samuel 2:35.

Joshua 23:12-24:27 and the downward spiral of Judges must not be taken to negate Hannah's conviction that God who overthrows the proud also lifts up the 'poor and needy' (1 Samuel 2:1-8), language which is echoed in the prophetic description of exile and restoration.²⁹ It is for this reason that Pate *inter alia* adds a fifth component to the Deuteronomistic view of Israel's history viz that of a promise of the restoration of Israel (Pate 2000:27), a promise which as we shall see was just as clearly present within the eschatological perspective of the prophets as the threat of impending exile was within their judicial denouncement of Israel's covenant infidelity.

Before turning our attention to the words of the prophets we must look briefly at one further theological theme which emerges within the Former Prophets, but which is of great significance for the prophetic understanding of exile and restoration and that is the theme of the *remnant*. According to Gerhard Hasel (1988:132) 'the Elijah narrative introduces for the first time the promise of a faithful remnant from Israel, a remnant loyal to Yahwistic covenant faith', a theme that 'is further developed in the prophetic writings' (*cf* Dumbrell 1994:76-78). Within the Old Testament, the idea of the remnant is both positive and negative. On the one hand the idea of a remnant is used to show that 'the catastrophe undergone by the community is so great that only an insignificant remnant survives or none at all' (2 Kings 19:4 *cf* Isaiah 1:9), on the other hand 'the connotation is positive: despite the greatness of the catastrophe, a remnant survives as the basis for renewed community life' (Meyer 1992:670). This 'renewed community life' should however not be taken independently of Yahweh, an idea which would be quite foreign to the theology of the Deuteronomist, for it is Yahweh who allows a remnant to remain or not (*cf* 2 Kings 21:14) and it is because of Yahweh's faithfulness to his promises that any remnant becomes a symbol of hope for the future. But a symbol of hope, it very definitely was and thus as the reality of the exile became more and more inevitable, the focus of God's purposes for the Israel and through Israel for the world, centred not upon the increasingly stubborn and rebellious

²⁹ According to Noth, the apparently positive material such as the prayer of Solomon in 1 Kings 8:44-53 or the account of the release of Jehoiachin (2 Kings 25) are not indicative of a definite future hope but merely descriptive of a scattered people praying toward the former temple site or the last information about the Davidic monarchy which the Deuteronomist had at his disposal and faithfully reported (*cf* Noth 1981:97-98). Similarly as far as the material in Deuteronomy apparently predicting a return from exile on condition of repentance is concerned, Noth simply says that 'Dtr. (*sic*) clearly knew nothing about the additions to the Deuteronomic law which postulate a new future' (1981:98), which of course removes part of the evidence on the basis of presuppositions about the Deuteronomist's *tempus* and *modus operandi*.

nation, but upon the elect remnant who for their part remained loyal to Yahweh and could thus fulfil the role of his chosen servant.

*2.3. Exile, Restoration and the Latter Prophets.*³⁰

It is in particular when one turns to a study of the so-called Latter Prophets that the issue of theological diversity mentioned in our introduction comes into focus with renewed clarity. In the words of Robert Carroll commenting in particular on the canonical 'Book of the Twelve', 'there is no uniform representation of deportation in these texts, but a variety of positions reflecting the threat and experience of deportation and further tropes of return and restoration' (1997a:66). That such a diversity of perspectives does exist within the books of the Latter Prophets as a whole and not just the so-called minor prophets is clear from even a superficial study of their content. But the fact of such diversity does not necessarily imply a substantial contradiction, any more than evidence for an underlying unity of basic worldview necessarily implies the subjugation of dissident voices by a dominant Jerusalem-centred group. At the very least we are to bear in mind that the different books of the prophets, whatever the date of their final redaction, are in fact set in different epochs of Old Testament salvation-history and do reflect an unfolding picture of both the exile and the hope of restoration and its realization or otherwise in the history of the nation.³¹ In our brief and inevitably superficial assessment of the contribution of these books to the questions of exile and restoration, we will thus consider them first, as far as is possible, from the point of view of the historical setting depicted in each book and then in terms of the overall contribution of the collection as part of the Hebrew Bible.

³⁰ I have made particular use of the work of Dumbrell (1989; 1994) and Carroll (1997a) for my discussion of exile, restoration and the latter prophets. The former provides a brief, but thoughtful theological description of the content of these works, often reflecting in fresh ways on the eschatological dimension of the prophetic writings. The latter comes from a very different perspective to that of Dumbrell and has the advantage of being particularly focussed upon the question of exile, restoration and the prophets. Other works consulted include Ackroyd (1968); Von Rad (1975); Koch (1982; 1983).

³¹ This means that far from being the enemy of a nuanced hearing of the distinctive contribution of each book (*cf* Carroll 1997a:73), a literary and canonical rather than historical-critical reading of these books can allow them precisely to speak in their own terms before any attempt is made at the final and necessary hermeneutical task of investigating the contribution of these prophetic books to an overall understanding of the questions of exile and restoration.

2.3.1. The Pre-exilic Period

The book of Jonah

Questions concerning the dating and literary *genre* of the book of Jonah are of course complex and beyond the scope of our discussions. We include a brief discussion of the book because of its inclusion within the Hebrew Bible under the rubric of Latter Prophets. Furthermore we include the discussion at this point in our survey because the book has Assyria in view and the reference in 2 Kings 14:25 places Jonah the son of Amittai in the days of Jeroboam II. The book does not of course touch directly the question of Israel's exile and restoration, but it does bring two key truths about God into clear focus. Both of these are learnt from the mouth of his somewhat reluctant prophet. The first key truth is that the LORD, the God of the Hebrews is also 'the LORD, the God of heaven who made the sea and the dry land' (1:9). As such he is the sovereign creator and judge not only of Israel but of all the nations. Second, we learn that this LORD, the sovereign creator and judge, is also 'a gracious and compassionate God who relents from sending calamity' (4:2), a God who will show compassion and stay his hand of judgement in the light of repentance on behalf of those who hear his warnings and take them seriously. Thus although, like the parable of the good Samaritan, the book of Jonah contains some striking reversals - a rebellious prophet and a repentant pagan city - its fundamental principles are well established, perhaps the more so for the surprising way in which they are depicted. These fundamental principles of God's sovereignty, justice and mercy play a key role not only in Jonah, but within prophetic eschatology as a whole.

The Book of Amos

Set within the days of Uzziah king of Judah and Jeroboam II king of Israel, the words of 'Amos, one of the shepherds of Tekoa' (Amos 1:1) do indeed come against Israel and to a lesser degree against Judah and the surrounding nations³² as the angry roar of a ferocious lion about to attack

³² As is the case with the majority of the prophetic books, the oracles against the nations were spoken in the hearing not of the nations concerned but rather in the hearing of either Judah or, in the case of Amos, Israel. The reason for these oracles against the nations was primarily therefore to assure both Judah and Israel that the nations surrounding them would not escape God's wrath and were therefore a false refuge for God's people suffering under Divine Displeasure. Faced with the wrath of God manifested in social and political upheaval and

and utterly devour a helpless and abandoned flock (*cf* 1:2; 3:8,12). The thunderous roar emits from Mt Zion in Jerusalem (1:2), the royal citadel of Yahweh and is an affirmation of his righteous rule and sovereign claim over all nations. In essence, it is a declaration of impending judgement against all who have rebelled against the rule of Yahweh. In practice, this rebellion against Yahweh was manifested in social injustice, in immoral and perverse religion, in personal self-indulgence (*cf* 2:6-8; 4:1-5; 6:4-6) and ultimately in the stubborn refusal to listen to God's warnings manifested in a variety of ways (3:6-11; 7:1-6) and declared in the words of his prophet (7:10-16). In theological terms, it constituted a reversal of the exodus ideal with Israel repudiating her privileged status among the nations and becoming just like the nations around her (2:10-3:2; 9:7). The result of this stubborn rebellion is that Israel will fall, never to rise again (5:2 *cf* 2:13-16; 7:7-9; 8:1-3), her cities devastated and her people carried off into exile (7:11, 17). The definiteness of the prophet's words, despite his appeal for repentance, make it clear that such an impending doom is both inexorable and inevitable. Nor should Judah sit complacently by, smug and self-righteous while engaging in the same pattern of life, for the day of the LORD for which many foolishly cried would bring something quite different and far more terrible than that which was anticipated - the righteous wrath of God against *all* who repudiated his rule no matter who they are or what spiritual privileges they may claim (5:18-20).

But the words of judgement and doom uttered by the prophet will not be the LORD's final word concerning his chosen people. Though they will suffer the same fate as the surrounding nations, unlike those nations they will not be utterly destroyed. Though Israel were once mighty, only a remnant will survive the LORD's devastating onslaught (5:3). But a remnant will survive nevertheless (9:8) and in time the LORD will restore 'David's fallen tent' - probably a reference as in Hosea 1:11 to a reunited kingdom - and the consequence will be that the exiles of Israel will be restored (9:14) and will be given an inheritance within the land forever (9:15).³³

threat, the only hope was to turn to God himself in repentance and faith.

³³ Carroll (1997a:68-69) claims that 'deportation without restoration represents the dominant note of Amos' oracles. Only the concluding sections of the scroll hint at a restoration, but not necessarily a return from deportation.....It is possible to read the strange trope of the raising of the booth of David as some sort of allusion to the restoration of the Davidic empire, but even such a reading need not imply any return from exile....' This view seems to me to be unnecessarily minimalistic and fails to take account of the fact that the unity of all Israel remained an important component of prophetic eschatology. Thus 'tropes of restoration' could very easily find expression in terms of traditional imagery drawn from Israel's past.

The Book of Hosea

The book of Hosea can be divided into two sections (chap 1-3 and 4-14), each of which deals with the 'formal charge' (4:1) which the LORD, the faithful husband, has brought against Israel, his faithless wife (1:2; 2:2). The burden of this charge concerns the idolatrous worship of the northern kingdom depicted as Israel's pursuit of her lovers, the Baals to whom she has turned for fertility in the land and the provision of all her needs (2:5) and the foreign powers to whom she turned for refuge in a time of political upheaval (5:13; 7:11). But even though the primary focus of the prophecy is against the northern kingdom, Judah does not escape the prophet's urgent appeal and severe warning (4:15; 5:5,12,14). The appeal is for a return to the LORD who brought Israel up out of Egypt and settled her in a good land (6:1-3; 14:1-3) and who has through loving discipline sought to maintain her commitment to the covenant even though from the very beginning she has been wayward and rebellious (6:7; 11:2; 14:6). The warning is of an impending exile which will in effect reverse the exodus and the privileged position of the nation (1:2-8; 3:4; 5:14; 8:13-9:9; 11:1-6). But even in the midst of such a devastating judgement - indeed precisely by means of it - the LORD will act to discipline and restore his people (1:10-11; 3:5; 5:15; 14:4-8). God who brought his people up out of the bondage of Egypt (11:1; 13:4-6) will once more lead his people up from the land of exile and oppression in a new exodus (1:11 *cf* Exodus 1:10; 2:14-17; 5:15; 11:10-11), restoring them to himself (1:11-2:1; 2:23) and in this way will fulfilling his promises to Abraham (1:10) and his purposes for creation itself (2:18-23). Once again the familiar pattern of rebellion, prophetic warning, judgement in the wake of a refusal to listen to the prophets and the prospect of restoration in the face of repentance³⁴ is evident.

The Book of Micah

According to Dumbrell (1994:79) 'Micah, with much the same emphasis as his contemporary Isaiah, pronounces judgement upon the people of God, that is, historical Israel and Judah. In the

³⁴ Hosea contains a striking play on the Hebrew word שׁוּב - to turn, return. Thus because Israel refuses to 'return to the LORD' in the wake of his loving discipline and prophetic warning, she will 'return to Egypt' i.e., Assyria. But there she will in fact 'return to the LORD' and will thus be enabled by him to 'return to the Land.'

book are alternating messages of judgement and salvation'. For Carroll (1997a:70) 'the rhetoric of this scroll has something of the fierceness of Amos' language. The people's children will be deported (1:16) and the city of Jerusalem will become a heap of ruins (3:12). But intertwined with this rhetoric of appalling destruction is a quite different rhetoric of restoration (2:12-13; 4:6-7, 10)'. As was the case with both Amos and Hosea, the setting for Micah's prophecy is the Assyrian conquest of the northern kingdom and the devastating invasion of Judah by the Assyrian armies - even to the gates of Jerusalem (1:12; 5:1ff), although Micah also contains explicit reference to the destruction of Jerusalem (3:12) and the exile of the people of Judah at the hand of the Babylonians (4:10). Within the oracles of judgement against Samaria and Jerusalem, familiar images are found. First, the judgement comes because of perpetual rebellion against the LORD most obviously manifested in syncretistic worship and the exploitation of the poor and powerless, Second, the judgement comes in the wake of repeated warnings from the prophets whose words are ignored. Third, the judgement falls first upon Samaria and the kingdom of Israelites, but it will not be limited to them - Judah also will fall unless they learn the lesson and repent. Fourth, the judgement is finally manifested in the destruction of both cities and deportation from the land, a reversal of the goal of the exodus and the later Davidic / Solomonic ideal because of rebellion against the God of the covenant. The source of the trumpet blast of judgement is the 'holy temple' of the LORD (1:2) - in all likelihood the LORD's heavenly dwelling from which the LORD comes to bring judgement upon his enemies (1:3) and even upon Jerusalem and its temple which has become a talisman for a rebellious people (3:11-12). Its means of communication is the LORD's servant, his true prophet, who in the power of the Spirit denounces people, leaders and false prophets alike (3:5-12).

As far as the references to restoration are concerned, we note that in Micah, as in Isaiah 1-39, the notion of a remnant as the first-fruits of salvation and as the nucleus of the future people of God, becomes more prominent (2:12-13; 4:6-8; 5:7-9 *cf* Dumbrell 1989:174). Two further images of restoration are particularly striking, both of them shared by Isaiah 1-39. First, the outcome of restoration will be the establishment of Mt Zion as a centre not only of the restored and re-united nation, but of all the nations (4:1-5 *cf* Isaiah 2:1-5). The image of the Law 'going out' from Zion and the nations 'going up' to Zion recaptures the Solomonic ideal and opens the way for a renewal of the kingdom of God (4:7) expressed through the rule of God's chosen shepherd (5:1-5). But it goes further and presents the restored Jerusalem as God's permanent dwelling place

and the centre of world blessing just as Eden had been (4:1-5). Second, the path to restoration will be via the forgiveness of sins brought about on the basis of God's loyal love and faithfulness to his ancient promises (7:18-20 *cf* Isaiah 1:18; 6:7).

The Book of Isaiah

A careful look at the book of Isaiah in its final canonical form reveals that the book has as its historical-theological context two primary settings and that its message can thus be summarised in terms of two primary, though not exclusive themes.

The first section of the book *viz* chapter 1-39 is set against the rising Assyrian threat and in particular, though not exclusively, the siege of Jerusalem in the days of Hezekiah, king of Judah (*cf* Isaiah 1:7-9; 36:1-37:38). Although Jerusalem is in fact delivered from the hands of the Assyrians, this section serves as a severe warning to Jerusalem and Judah that unless they turn away from nominalism, injustice, infidelity and idolatry, the land of Judah already a smoking ruin (1:7-9) and the city of Jerusalem, a city under siege, would befall an even worse fate at the hands not of the Assyrians but the Babylonians whom Hezekiah had sought as an ally in his attempt to throw off the yoke of Assyrian oppression (39:1-8). The primary though not exclusive theme of this first section is thus the righteous judgment of the LORD, the Holy King of all the earth (6:3) and its key word is the word 'Woe' which the prophet pronounces first upon himself (6:5),³⁵ then upon the nation (3:8-26; 5:8-30) and ultimately upon humankind as a whole (2:6-22).³⁶ The reason for this judgement and woe is simple - Judah and Jerusalem who ought to have been God's loyal and obedient sons, have rebelled against him and so have become just like the other nations of the world (1:1-4; 2:6-8). This is seen perhaps most starkly in the very first chapter,

³⁵ Although a description of the prophet's encounter with the LORD occurs only in chapter 6, it is likely that this central chapter of 1-12 in fact records Isaiah's initial call to his prophetic task rather than a later call. This means that Isaiah began his ministry in the year that Uzziah died and that his declaration of woe upon himself and experience of forgiveness were paradigmatic for the first phase of his ministry to Judah - a ministry to a stubborn and rebellious house (*cf* 6:9-10) who were under divine wrath, but who if only they would listen could yet be the recipients of divine favour.

³⁶ The description of the judgement of the humankind is cast by Isaiah in eschatological terms. It is however closely related to judgement upon Judah so that Judah's judgement can be seen as paradigmatic of the judgement of the world. The function of this declaration of eschatological salvation for Judah and judgement for the world is to wean Judah from her propensity of trusting in the nations rather than in God (Isaiah 2:22).

where Jerusalem is likened to Sodom and Gomorrah (1:10 *cf* 3:8-9) and to Babylon, the great harlot whose pride and arrogance led to her downfall at God's command (1:21-23 *cf* 47:1-15; also 13:1-14:23).³⁷ The consequence of this is that Jerusalem and Judah will suffer great tribulation at the hands of the Assyrian invaders (3:1-4:1; 13-14; 5:26-30; 8:1-10). The image used to describe these events is that of 'deep darkness' and image which is later used by Ezekiel to describe the exile to Babylon (5:30; 8:21-22 *cf* Ezekiel 34:12), the language that of deportation (3:24-26). The devastation at the hands of the Assyrians will not however be absolute. The judgements upon Jerusalem and Judah are intended to purge, not to destroy (1:25) and they will in the end succeed (1:26). A remnant will survive and out of it will come hope for the future (4:2-6; 6:13; 10:20-23). Central to this future hope is the Zion theology which characterises Isaiah's prophecy and in particular his eschatological vision. In the 'last days' (2:1) the mountain of the LORD's house will be lifted up as a centre of world blessing and peace (2:1-4) and God will be with his people, not now as a terrible enemy and judge but as a glorious King and Saviour, ruling through his anointed king (9:1-7; 11:1-16). In 'that day' the enemies of God's people will be overthrown (10:5-19), the exiles will be gathered in a new exodus (11:12-16) and salvation seen in terms of participation in the great eschatological banquet and victory over death itself (25:6-9) will flow to all the nations who seek the LORD.

Isaiah 40-66, which is set in the context of the Babylonian exile,³⁸ begins with a declaration of *comfort* (the antithesis of woe) to Judah and Jerusalem. The substance of this comfort is that Jerusalem's hard labour is over and her sins have been paid for. The new exodus is about to begin as God approaches Zion leading his scattered people as a shepherd leads his flock (40:1-11). At first glance the salvation that is promised seems to refer to the earlier descriptions of the siege of Jerusalem and devastation of Judah at the hands of the Assyrians. But the transitional

³⁷ The fact that Babylon rather than Assyria heads the list of oracles against the nations in Isaiah 13-21 is striking. This may be because it was upon Babylon in particular along with Egypt that Hezekiah had pinned his hopes, but it may also have to do with the fact that from the very earliest narratives within the Old Testament Babylon, like Sodom and Gomorrah stood as the archetypes of arrogant rebellion against the LORD and thus as models of his judgements against those who rebel against him.

³⁸ The debate about the dating of Isaiah 40-66 lies beyond the scope of our study. I have included this section at this point of our discussion because I remain convinced that there is a fundamental literary unity to the book of Isaiah which resists attempts to subdivide the book. Furthermore, the doctrine of God as espoused in so-called Deutero-Isaiah is precisely that of the LORD who not only explains the past, but also foretells the future. It thus seems to me to be somewhat ironical to insist that the book must necessarily be retrospective and thus rather than pre-exilic.

section in 39:1-8, which chronologically precedes 36:1-37:38 and the later detail (43:14-15; 44:24-45:13; 47:1-48:22), make it clear that it is in fact the Babylonian exile which forms the backdrop for the words in this section. Although some of the descriptions in 40-66 do describe the devastation suffered by Jerusalem at the hands of the Babylonians, they do so primarily in the context of describing the greatness of the salvation that the LORD will achieve for his captive people. Thus just as judgement and 'woe' dominated the language of Isaiah 1-39, so salvation and its key word 'comfort' form the keynote of the Isaiah 40-66. This salvation will be brought about by God's power and through his Righteous Servant. Although the identity of the servant varies within this section of the prophecy, it is most clearly depicted in the so-called Servant Songs (42:1-9; 49:1-7; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12), where the servant is described both as Israel (49:3) and the one who restores Israel (49:6) and brings Yahweh's salvation, that is the establishment of justice and peace (42:1-9) to the ends of the earth. This he will achieve by his own extreme suffering and subsequent exaltation (52:13-53:12). In the descriptions of this salvation in Isaiah 40-66, familiar images such as exodus, covenant and conquest of the land abound (e.g., 40:3-5; 41:17-20; 42:10-17; 43:1-14), as does the notion of the Divine fulfilment of the ancient promises (e.g., 41:8-10; 44:1-5, 21).³⁹ But perhaps the most significant image used to describe the salvation that Yahweh will bring is that of a renewed creation with a renewed Jerusalem at its centre (chapter 60-66). Thus the book ends where it began, *viz* with the focus placed firmly on Jerusalem,⁴⁰ which, having suffered the darkness of desolation because of her sins, has at last, through the forgiveness of her sins, once more become the city of the great king and the light of the world (60:1-22; 62:1-12; 65:17-25). Zion will in the end be redeemed with justice, her penitent ones with righteousness and through that redemption, salvation will flow out to the ends of the earth.

³⁹ Of particular importance in this connection is the repeated use of titles like 'Jacob' and 'Israel' to describe the nation and God's own use of 'the God of Jacob' and 'God of Israel' to describe himself.

⁴⁰ Dumbrell (1989:98-99) points out that 'when we are considering the major contribution to the canon which the book makes, the interest in the fate of the historical Jerusalem and the future hopes bound up with the notion of Jerusalem are central. This concern provides for the theological cohesion of Isaiah and gives it its unitary stamp'. By the notion of Jerusalem Dumbrell is referring to the eschatological concept of Jerusalem which, as will become clearer from Ezekiel but is present in Isaiah, transcends anything that the historical Jerusalem was or became.

The book of Zephaniah is set in the reign of Josiah and has, in the words of Dumbrell (1994:94), an eschatology which 'is more explicitly universal than that of any of the other prophets' in the pre-exilic period. According to Carroll (1997a:71) the 'scroll celebrates the day of YHWH and reads like a proto-apocalyptic piece of rhetoric.' Certainly the day of the LORD does seem to be a key focus of the book thus giving it a strong eschatological tone. According to the prophet the day of the LORD is fast approaching (1:14) and will soon break forth as a day of wrath and distress, of gloom and of darkness (1:15) images which we have already seen were characteristic descriptions of the impending exile of Judah and the fall of Jerusalem. And it certainly is Judah and Jerusalem upon which the words of judgement are primarily focussed (1:4-18), although the book begins with an image of universal judgement reminiscent of the Flood narrative (1:2-3) and includes 'all who live in the earth' (1:18) as under threat from God's 'consuming fire' (1:18; 3:8). God's anger against Judah and Jerusalem has been provoked by the city's idolatry, syncretism and nominalism (1:4-6) and will find expression in a 'holy war', viz Yahweh's war against his own people, in which the people of Jerusalem are likened to a sacrifice (1:8). Thus the judgements that were meted out against wicked nations in Yahweh's past conquest of the land (*cf* Genesis 15:16; Deuteronomy 9:4-6), will now befall Judah and Jerusalem because they have become just like those nations. Once again the nations will fall to Yahweh's onslaught and his 'outstretched hand' (2:4-15) and Jerusalem, a 'city of oppressors, rebellious and defiled' (3:1) will be included in the fall-out. However for the remnant, the humble poor of the land who seek the LORD (2:3), there will be shelter on the day of God's wrath and a good future in the renewed Jerusalem together with all from among the nations who fear the LORD and do homage to him (3:9-20). Jerusalem, once humbled, will be established once more as the city of the Great King and he will gather his people from the four corners of the earth and will establish them once more in their own land, thus finally fulfilling his promise made to Abraham (3:20).⁴¹

⁴¹ Dumbrell (1989:187) has two striking points in this connection. First in relation to 3:9 he points to the reversal of the judgement upon Babel and the promise of a true united humanity based upon Yahweh's salvation. He then points out that 'the prophecy finishes on an Abrahamic note: salvation is depicted in terms of achieving a name for the gathered, an event which has world significance.'

2.3.2. The Exilic Period

One need not read far in the story of Israel at the end of the 7th and beginning of the 6th century BC to recognize that the period was disastrous for Judah. In 597 Jerusalem surrendered to the Babylonians, the temple was looted and the leadership of the city together with a number of likely younger leaders were deported to Babylon. After an ill fated rebellion by Zedekiah, the city of Jerusalem itself fell to the might of the Babylonian army under Nebuchadnezzar. The city walls were levelled to the ground and the city set aflame. The exile, foreseen in the words of Deuteronomy 28 and threatened by the prophets, had finally come to pass.

But the reality of the exile did more than vindicate those earlier prophets who, despite opposition and threat. It also placed before the prophets of Yahweh the task of explanation and redefinition in the wake of the decline of national Israel and the ultimate the fall of Jerusalem, together with the accompanying loss of all the externals of the Jewish faith and social structure - the temple, the ark, the priesthood and sacrificial system, Davidic kingship - even the very land itself. As Dumbrell (1994:97) quite correctly points out, ‘....All these events raise questions: How intrinsic to the true nature of Israel is the apparatus of national institutionalism? What or where is the true Israel? Will there be any future for Israel and what will be the nature of it? Will a new individualism replace the old nationalism, and will personal faith replace state commitment?....The exilic prophets Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Joel, Obadiah and Isaiah 40-66 wrestle with and attempt to address these questions’ Given that we have already considered Isaiah 40-66, we turn our attention in this section of our discussion to a brief survey of the answers given by Jeremiah, Joel, Obadiah and Ezekiel respectively.

The Book of Jeremiah

The introductory comments of Dumbrell (1994) and Carroll (1997a) provide a useful springboard for our discussion of Jeremiah for they act as a summary not only of the book itself, but also of the two very different perspectives which characterise discussions about the themes of exile and restoration within the Latter prophets.

According to Dumbrell (1994:97-98):

Jeremiah summons Judah to come to terms with Babylon's emergence to world leadership and to face the fall of the Judean state and the demise of the nation's external fabric. But his is not a prophecy of doom alone. Jeremiah looks to the future and even lays the foundation for it by prophesying the reconstitution of the new people of God under a refurbished Sinai arrangement, the new covenant. Jeremiah clearly sees the future of the people of God lies with the exiles taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar in 597 B.C. (24:4-7). Indeed they are soon to be joined by their compatriots ! And the prophet understands that the exile will not effect the needed reforms and changes of attitude in the exiles but rather that God will use the time of exile to give his people there a new heart to know him (24:7).

(1994:97-98)

By contrast, Carroll affirms that:

Jeremiah is much more a scroll of destruction, dispersion and diaspora than Isaiah. Its narratives and poems focus on disintegration of life as lived in Jerusalem, the invading forces of the enemy from the north, the deportation of people to Babylon and the flight of so many fugitives to Egypt. The deep enmity of YHWH against the people of Judah and Jerusalem is a dominant theme of the scroll of Jeremiah....Indeed with Jeremiah there is a (grand) narrative of the final dissolution of the people: they came from Egypt (2:6) and they return to Egypt 'until there is an end to them' (44:27). In effect, this representation of the history of the people succeeds in unravelling that history and rendering it null and void'.

(1997a:77-78)

Carroll does acknowledge that there are 'a number of texts which embody hopes of a future renewal of the nation' (1997a:78), among them 'the so-called book of consolation (30-31)' which 'represents the fullest expression of diaspora discourses in Jeremiah, but also strongly reflects the conventional 'restoration of fortunes' (שוב שבות) theme to be found in other prophetic collections'. But his overall impression is that such expectations of return both within Jeremiah and the other prophetic literature are more likely a reflection of the hopes and fantasies of the

Jerusalem community ‘shaped by an ideology of exile rather than deportation’ than a representation of the hopes entertained by the deported communities in the diaspora (1997a:79).

We will return to Carroll’s overall thesis regarding the question of restoration from exile within the prophetic literature at the end of our survey of the prophets, but we note for the moment that there is no good reason on the grounds of Jeremiah itself, to doubt that the words of consolation are any less the words of the prophet than are the words of impending doom. Thus, for example, although the words regarding the ‘seventy years of exile’ (25:1-14) do speak of long term exile over and against the vain hope of the false prophets (27:1-22; 29:15-23), they do not preclude the hope of return for the exiles any more than the declaration that God will be with the exiles in Babylon (24:4-7) implies that Babylon will be a new land of promise. From Jeremiah’s perspective the exile will be protracted, but it will end - Babylon will be punished (25:12-14) and the exiles will return (24:6-7; 29:4-14). The key to this return will be a ‘new covenant’, implying a new exodus, and involving a new, wholehearted commitment to the Law of Yahweh by a people who are truly a kingdom of priests and a company of prophets, no longer needing mediators between themselves and the LORD (31:31-34).⁴²

We note, furthermore, that the book begins and ends with a strongly internationalistic perspective. The opening chapter describes Jeremiah’s appointment as a prophet to the nations (1:4,5,10) and the book ends with the oracles against the nations, particularly Babylon who is the agent of Judah’s overthrow and who will herself be overthrown (46:1-51:64).⁴³ Within the context of this world-vision comes God’s charge against Judah who are stubborn and rebellious, turning away from the LORD who rescued them from Egypt and gave them a good land in which to live. In their stubborn rebellion, Judah have defiled the land and rejected God’s prophets,

⁴² This new situation of the ‘Law on the heart’ does not contradict, but rather fulfills the requirements of the Sinai covenant. What does change as far as the substance of the covenantal arrangement is concerned is that priests and prophets as the mediators of the covenant will no longer be required. The key to this change is that sin has finally and fully been dealt with by Yahweh.

⁴³ It is with this in mind that Dumbrell (1989:113) describes Jeremiah as ‘the prophet who ushers in the ‘times of the Gentiles’’ by which he means the period of the dissolution of national Israel with the fall of Jerusalem and the end of the Davidic kingdom and the time of the ascendancy of the nations, beginning with the Babylonians. This shift to internationalism has a key function within the overall schema of redemption-history for it sets the scene for God’s redemptive purposes to be re-expressed in international rather than nationalist terms. The language is drawn from the redemptive history of Israel, but the scope of God’s saving purposes goes far beyond the limits of the nation.

ignoring both God's discipline and loving appeal (2:1-3:5). The consequence is that Judah will be overthrown, the city of Jerusalem will fall and the temple will be destroyed (4:5-25:38). But even in the midst of bringing this charge, the LORD underscores that his great purposes will stand. First, Jerusalem will become the centre of God's kingdom, a place to which all the nations will come in order to do homage to the LORD (3:14-18) and it is this reality which should motivate Judah and her fallen sister Israel to repent and to return to the LORD (3:19-4:2). Second, the LORD will raise up a righteous king to rule over his restored people so that they may once again live in safety in the land (23:1-8; cf 33:15-17). Third, the LORD will rescue his people from bondage and bring them back from the distant lands to the land of promise (30:4-24; 33:6-8). Fourth, as we noted above, the LORD will deal decisively with the sins of his people and will make a new covenant with them, a covenant which will not fail because of their disobedience but which will bring about the good life of blessing and rest that God has purposed for them (31:1-40; 32:26-44). Quite when these promises will be fulfilled, the book does not say for its postscript records the fall of Jerusalem and the end of an era in salvation history, although the description of the release of Jehoiachin does provide a glimmer of hope when read against the background of the promises of restoration. But that they will be fulfilled is clear, for the time will come when the Gentile overlords will themselves be overthrown and God's kingdom, that is, his people living in his place under his righteous rule, will be established forever.

The Book of Joel

The book of Joel does not provide any detail with regard to its historical setting although the placement of the book within a period contemporaneous with Jeremiah (cf Dumbrell 1989:153) seems a reasonable conjecture. The primary focus of the book is upon the 'day of the LORD', a day which begins as a day of judgement for God's own recalcitrant people at the hands of a divinely summoned army (preempted by and depicted as a swarm of ravaging locusts),⁴⁴ but which soon spills over into a day of Divine Vengeance against all the enemies of God whomever they may be and a day of Divine Salvation for the people of God described as those who 'call upon the name of the LORD' (2:32). Theophanic imagery from Sinai such as darkness, gloom,

⁴⁴ It is sometimes suggested that what is in view is a plague of locusts depicted as a divinely summoned army. While a literal plague of locusts may well have been in view initially it seems to me however that Joel also has in view invading armies (Babylonians?) which are about to sweep across the land.

fire, signs and wonders and fear is found throughout the book (2:1-2, 10-11, 30-31; 3:15-16) so that although the terminology of 'new covenant' is not used, the Sinaitic imagery together with the references to the pouring out of the Spirit of God upon *all* of God's servants (*cf* Numbers 11:29), suggest at least a covenantal renewal and the forgiveness of sins (3:21) for the remnant among God's people. In contrast to the remnant who are gathered for salvation and restoration, the nations will be gathered for a day of wrath (3:13) and repayment for the violence inflicted against the people of God. Thus the LORD reserves the rights of the sovereign king - the right to use the nations as an instrument of discipline against his people, but also the right to require from the nations an account of their own wickedness and violent cruelty. The closing imagery and declaration (3:17-21) gives a familiar, yet vital thrust to the eschatological vision of the book. The Day of the LORD will bring to pass God's ultimate purpose, the goal to which Old Testament redemptive history has been moving, *viz* the LORD dwelling in the midst of his redeemed and forgiven people in a Paradise regained.

The book of Obadiah

Despite its brevity, the book of Obadiah plays a key role in the formulation of prophetic eschatology and thus also for our survey of the themes of exile and restoration. The book is probably to be set in a time shortly following the destruction of Jerusalem, a time when the misfortune of the people of Judah is still a tragic and harsh reality for the prophet (10-14) and the complicity of the surrounding nations such as Edom with the invading armies a raw wound. The prophets response to these things is typical of the judgement oracles against the nations. Although the enemies of God's people (in this typified by Edom) gloat at the misfortune of Judah and Jerusalem, the time of their own judgement is fast approaching (1-9). But their judgment and destruction will be final, while that of Judah and Jerusalem will be temporary (15-17). The Israelite exiles will return and they will possess the land of their enemies as it was when they first came up from Egypt and God himself will dwell in their midst and rule over them for their good (18-21).

The Book of Ezekiel

Despite the complexity of much of its detail, the overall structure and message of the book of

Ezekiel is relatively straightforward. The book, set within the period immediately before and after the fall of Jerusalem, and described as ‘the word of the LORD which came to Ezekiel...in the land of the Babylonians’ (1:2-3), can be divided into three major sections. The first, comprising chapters 1-24, denounces Jerusalem and predicts exile for Jerusalem’s leadership and people and the destruction of the city. The second, chapters 25-32, consists of oracles against the surrounding nations and declares that through his judgements, the nations will know that Yahweh alone is the Sovereign LORD. The third, chapters 33-48, explains the fall of Jerusalem and contains prophecies describing the restoration of Israel from the exile by the God who ‘takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live’ (33:11). Central to these promises of restoration are three things, *viz* (1) the fact that the LORD himself will seek for and rule over his people as their True Shepherd (34:1-31), (2) the fact that the nation will be brought back from exile by a new exodus (36:8-38) and an act of recreation by the life giving Spirit of the LORD (37:1-14) and (3) the fact that at the centre of God’s act of restoration will be an idealised and perfected Jerusalem and Temple, with the latter virtually co-terminus with the city itself, so much so that the whole city can be described by the name ‘the LORD is there’ (48:35). Here then are the familiar Deuteronomistic themes - rebellion, judgement, repentance, compassion and restoration as well as the Exodus ideal - a people loyal to God, living in the land which God has promised them and enjoying the reality and the blessing of having God dwelling in their midst as their God and King.

2.3.3. The ‘Post-Exilic Period’

According to Dumbrell (1994:127) ‘the prophets of the postexilic period were faced with the failed materialization of the extravagant promises of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, but they fulfilled the traditional role of Israelite prophecy with no apparent diminution of vigour. Haggai and Zechariah (*circa* 520 B.C.) and Malachi (*circa* 460 B.C.) met this failure by maintaining the eschatology while also redressing present community problems.’ Dumbrell’s reference to a ‘failed materialization of the extravagant promises’ is important for it underlines the fact that although a remnant of the people had returned to Judah under leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua (Haggai 1:12 *cf* Ezra 1:1-2:70), the reality of life back in the land fell very far short of the expectations for the return, even after the rebuilding of the temple had begun (Haggai 2:1-3; *cf* Ezra 3:11-13). The consequence of this is that even these so-called *post* exilic prophecies are

essentially forward looking and describe the fulfilment of the prophecies of restoration as something which lies in the future rather than the present experience of the returnees. Furthermore, by speaking out in classical prophetic terms, against the failure of the returnees to live by the demands of the covenant, these prophets indicate that the change of heart and heartfelt obedience to the Torah which were the key to restoration are not yet a reality.

The Book of Haggai

The book of Haggai is set in the 'second year of King Darius', when 'a remnant of the people' have returned and have begun to resettle Jerusalem and its surrounds. The prophet's primary complaint is that whereas the people have been very concerned to establish themselves, they have neglected the restoration of the temple, the traditional symbol of God's presence and rule. The consequence of this neglect is that God has withheld his blessings from the people and has now sent his prophet to explain their hardships as God's chastisement of a people who fail to put him first. What is particularly striking within the book is that, despite the fact of the return by at least some of the exiles, the promise of restoration remains a future reality. This promise is expressed in classical terms - a fulfilment of the exodus ideal (2:5), a recapitulation of the Sinai theophany (2:6), the re-establishment of the temple as the house of Yahweh where he dwells gloriously in the midst of his people (2:7-9) and the establishment of the rule of a descendant of David (2:20-23; cf 1 Chronicles 3:1-19).

The book of Zechariah

As is clear from its opening words, the book of Zechariah is set in the same period as that of Haggai and thus not surprisingly manifests the same concerns viz the rebuilding of the temple and the eschatological future of Jerusalem and its temple as a world centre.⁴⁵ The book is usually divided into two major sections which, despite their variety of form, share the same basic concerns and should thus be treated as a literary unit with the second section (chapters 9-14) perhaps providing theological commentary on the first (chapters 1-8). The book begins with an urgent appeal expressed in classical prophetic terms calling upon the inhabitants of Judah to

⁴⁵ Cf Dumbrell 1989:193-94; 1994:128-29.

‘return to the LORD’ and to not be like their forefathers who refused to listen to the prophets and upon whom the LORD brought great calamity. This urgent appeal is then followed by a series of visions, echoing the language and imagery of Ezekiel, and assuring the remnant of God’s people that the LORD will overthrow their enemies and will honour his promises regarding Jerusalem and its temple just as he had honoured the words of threat and judgement that the prophets had announced in earlier days. Judah and Jerusalem will be God’s chosen dwelling place (2:12; *cf* 8:23) and there he will rule over his cleansed and consecrated people and over all the nations of the world who will come to do homage to him (*cf* 8:20-23). Of this coming rule the rebuilding of the temple under Joshua the high priest and Zerubbabel the heir to the throne are symbolic, even though their own day appears to be a day of small things (*cf* 8:6).

What is particularly striking about the image that emerges from the book of Zechariah, and this fact is underlined by the collection of oracles which make up the theological commentary in the second section of the book, is that the prophet does not see restoration as a present reality but rather as a future hope. Indeed his viewpoint would have been entirely appropriate to the exilic period and thus suggests that the reader should view the prophets own day in terms of an effective continuing state of exile in which Judah and Jerusalem are still oppressed by foreign powers and still thus awaiting redemption from the LORD. According to Zechariah, this redemption will come but at great cost to both the redeemer and his people. However, the end result will be victory for the kingdom of God and lasting peace for his people and for all among the nations on whom his favour rests.

The book of Malachi

The book of Malachi is the final book of the Latter prophets and depicts a situation after the rebuilding of the temple (1:10), perhaps as a precursor to the reforms described in Ezra-Nehemiah (Dumbrell 1989:200). Central to the message of the book is the covenant which God made with Israel at Horeb and the privilege that Israel held as a result of that covenant (1:2-3; 2:4-6; 3:1; 4:4). The LORD for his part has been faithful to his covenant, but Israel have not - neither its priests nor its people (2:9-12; 3:5) - and for this reason the people of Judah and Jerusalem are experiencing hardship and a curse rather than the blessings associated with covenant renewal and restoration. The role of Malachi as the messenger of the LORD is therefore

to call the people and their leaders back to covenant faithfulness and to warn them that failure to do so will lead to judgement. The day of the LORD will indeed come, but it will have surprising and disastrous consequences for those whose royalty to Yahweh is merely nominal. For Malachi then, the time of the restoration of the fortunes of God's people through the establishment of the kingdom of God remains a future event (3:1-5; 4:1-6), a coming day in the light of which the people are to repent and to return to the LORD. Such repentance was in fact forthcoming on the part of the righteous remnant (3:16-18) to whom, as in the days of the exile, assurances are given that they will share in the blessings of the coming age of restoration. Thus the entire perspective of the book suggests that though they are back in the land, the people are in effect still in exile since neither the changed heart of the new covenant age nor the blessings commensurate with that age are being experienced.

In concluding our survey of the themes of exile and restoration within the Latter Prophets, we return briefly to the comments of Carroll (1997a:79) who tends to see such notions of restoration as are found within the prophetic literature as an 'expressions of the beliefs, fantasies or hopes of folk in Jerusalem shaped by an ideology of exile rather than one of deportation'. To argue that diaspora novellas such as Esther or Daniel contain 'little sense of a burning desire to return to Palestine' does not establish the fact that the prophets did not speak of restoration after deportation. Such talk of restoration was always conditioned by the need for a heartfelt return to the LORD and is in fact entirely consistent with the message of prophets such as Ezekiel who spoke of restoration from within Babylon, and those like Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi who, having experienced a return to the land, still saw exilic conditions as prevalent and still looked forward to the coming day of the LORD. What needs to be recognized, and here Carroll does have a point, is that mere geography alone does not constitute exilic conditions any more than it constitutes an end to the exile. Nor, for that matter, do prevailing exilic conditions imply that all hope of an end to exile must be abandoned. Even the briefest survey of *extra-Biblical* Jewish literature shows that this is by no means the case.

2.4. Exile, Restoration and the Writings

Both the extensive and the diverse nature of the material contained within the writings mean that our study of the theme of exile and restoration within this material can only be selective. We

therefore focus our attention on the theological-historical work of the Chronicler and the book of Daniel. We begin however with a brief comment about the book of Psalms.

The book of the Psalms

The book of Psalms which stands at the head of the Writings contains a number of the key themes which we have already encountered in our discussions. Notable among these are the centrality of the Torah to the blessed life, a theme which introduces the Psalter (Psalm 1; *cf* Psalm 19; 119), the associated themes of the Davidic kingship and Temple, with Mt Zion and the city of Jerusalem as the centre for world blessing (Psalm 2; 45-48) and the theme of the king as a righteous sufferer and true servant of Yahweh whose vindication will lead to the salvation of the people (Psalm 3; 7; 11; 18). In addition to these there is the overarching theme of praise to Yahweh for his goodness and faithfulness. This theme of praise gives the book its name and concludes the Psalter and underscores the fact that although the Psalms can in one sense be described as Israel's response to Yahweh, they remain in the true sense 'theology', a declaration of Yahweh, the God of Israel so that all the earth may indeed praise him for his wonderful deeds (*cf* Kraus 1992:11-16).

It is precisely at the point of praise, that we encounter a second key human response in the book of Psalms, namely that of *faith*. In the words of Allen (1987:59): 'Praise and faith are the head and tail of the same penny, the outside and inside of the same pot.' This is made clear, for example, in Psalm 56 where the psalmist praises God for his trustworthy promises and declares his trust in the God whose word he praises (56:3-4, 10-11). But faith is itself a carefully nuanced reality within the Psalter, so that Allen can speak of faith in the varying phases of life, both personal and national, phases of orientation, disorientation and reorientation (1987:59-74). Personal and national catastrophe are to be met with candour, but always with faith, a faith which seeks understanding and rests, in the midst of chaos, upon God's loyal love and faithfulness. Such faith is not blind, but is focussed in Yahweh's mighty acts, both past and future. It looks back at what God has done and is thus enabled to look beyond the present crisis to what God will do for his people and his Anointed One in the future. It was such faith which enabled a nation who had heard of what God had done for the fathers (Psalm 44:1), but who were themselves humbled, rejected and scattered among the nations (Psalm 44:9-12), to continue to cry out to God

in their distress and to look for his coming salvation (*cf* Psalm 74; 79; 137).⁴⁶

The book of Daniel

The book of Daniel, whose place within the Writings is due more to its apocalyptic style than its date of production, falls into two clear sections *viz* chapters 1-6 and 7-12 although the question of structure is complicated by the presence within the book of an Aramaic (2:4b-7:28) and two Hebrew (1:1-2:4a; 8:1-12:13) sections. The use of Aramaic, the *lingua franca* of the Persian empire, serves the realism of the narrative but also underlines the universality of the book's perspective, putting the reader in touch 'with the major purpose of the book, which is to survey the course of human history from the advent of the 'times of the Gentiles' until the ushering in of the kingdom of God' (Dumbrell 1989:259). The Hebrew section in 1:1-21 is introductory and maintains the connections between Daniel and the prophetic literature, while that in chapters 8-12 probably functions as a particular and formal application of the universal truths expressed in 7:1-28 to the Israelite situation.

The introduction in 1:1-21 serves to give the reader an important perspective through which to view the book as a whole. The reader is told at the outset that it was the LORD who delivered Jehoiakim into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon and that the king of Babylon took articles from the temple in Jerusalem to the house of his god in the 'land of Shinar' (1:2). This rare phrase recalls Genesis 11 and Zechariah 5:11 and serves then to highlight the fundamental conflict contained within the book of Daniel, *viz* the conflict between rebellious humanity in all its self-assertion and arrogance on the one hand and the kingdom of God on the other. Strikingly enough, the fact that Nebuchadnezzar's victory is by the LORD's grace establishes right at the outset the truth that Daniel and his friends clearly understood and which the kings of the earth had to learn - the LORD, Israel's God, is the true God and his rule cannot be resisted nor his purpose thwarted (see e.g. 1:2; 2:20-23; 4:34-35; 5:25-30; 6:25-28). It also established what might be called an exemplary pattern of life for those who faced life under foreign domination.

⁴⁶ The progression within the Songs of Ascents (Psalm 120-134) is particularly striking in this regard for these psalms not only recall in the words of David the greatness of the temple, the dwelling of the LORD and the joy of pilgrimage to Jerusalem and its temple, but also urge the returnees to rejoice and to know that those who have sown in tears will reap with joy and those who build in the LORD's strength do not build in vain.

If Yahweh was the true king, then he alone was to feared and obeyed, particularly by those among his people who in other respects could stand in service of foreign rulers. In this Daniel and his friends exemplify the same attributes as Joseph in the court of Pharaoh.

Chapter 7, the final Aramaic chapter in the book, can be divided into two halves (vv1-14 and 15-28), the first half dominated by Daniel's visionary dream. The four beasts represent again the totality of human opposition to God and his purposes, while the little horn probably represents the typical ruler of such kingdoms - boastful and arrogant. In the face of such human opposition, thrones are set in place and heavenly judgement begins. Humankind in their rebellious arrogance are ultimately overthrown and the kingdom of God, manifested here in the rule of the Son of Man, is established. The second half of the chapter furthers the interpretation and points to the fact that the enmity which exists between the LORD and the kingdoms of men will be manifested in hostility against the 'saints of the Most High'. But despite such hostility, the kingdom of God will triumph and the saints of the Most High will share in that triumph and will themselves be the recipients of dominion as was the first man Adam and the heavenly Son of Man (*cf* Dumbrell 1994:143).⁴⁷ The reception of this dominion will follow a time of hardship and persecution which will be brought to an end by God's intervention on behalf of his people. This general depiction of world history is then applied with particular reference to the situation of Israel. Even though it now appears as if the exile is as it were 'open ended' (seventy sevens - 9:4) and even though these days of exile will be times of woe for Jerusalem and its people and for all the saints of the Most High, the times of exile and tribulation will be brought to an end and the kingdom of the Most High and his people will be established forever for history, for all its ambiguities and contradictions, is firmly under divine control.

The book/s of Ezra - Nehemiah

That the composite work Ezra-Nehemiah should be understood against the backdrop of restoration from exile can be seen from the literary-theological context within which the activities of the book's main characters Ezra and Nehemiah are placed. The book begins with an account

⁴⁷ Indeed there is an implied association between the saints of the Most High and the son of Man, rather than an exact identification between the two (*cf* Dumbrell 1989:262-63).

of the edict permitting the return and a list of returning exiles, not dissimilar to the lists associated with the exodus and conquest in the book of Numbers and an account of the rebuilding of the temple despite opposition (Ezra 1-6). This sets the backdrop for a further return of exiles under Ezra some seventy years later (Ezra 7-8) and for Ezra's ministry amongst the returnees in Judah. A similar but not identical list of the original returnees is found in Nehemiah 7:4-73 where it likewise functions as a backdrop for Ezra's public reading of the Law. Furthermore Ezra 1:1 uses a striking fulfilment formula in which Jeremiah's declaration of a prolonged, but finite exile is mentioned (*cf* Daniel 9:1-2), so that the entire narrative is to be seen in the context of the fulfilment of Jeremiah's promise of restoration.

Given this context, it is thus a surprise to the reader to encounter within the narrative a clear emphasis on disappointment with the state of affairs after the return and thus the reality of a continuing exile.⁴⁸ Thus in Ezra 3:12, the reader is told that in contrast to the shout of joy of the people when the foundation of the new temple was laid, 'many of the older priests and Levites and family heads, who had seen the former temple, wept aloud when they saw the foundation of this temple being laid'. Likewise Ezra's words of confession when he discovers that some of the original returnees have inter-married with people from the land contain statements that make it clear that he saw the exile as very much a reality, despite the rebuilt temple. Thus he uses phrases like 'because of our sins, we and our kings and our priests have been subjected to sword and captivity, to pillage and humiliation at the hands of foreign kings, *as it is today*' (9:7) and again '*though we are slaves*, our God has not deserted us in our bondage' (9:9). Similarly Nehemiah declares to God in prayer '...but see, we are slaves today, slaves in the land you gave our forefathers so that they could eat its fruit and the other good things it produces. Because of our sins, its abundant harvest goes to the kings you have placed over us. They rule over our bodies and our cattle as they please. We are in great distress' (Nehemiah 9:36-37). And although in each case the people, identified as the remnant, responded appropriately to the pleas of Ezra and Nehemiah and to the reading of the Law, the end of the book of Nehemiah records Nehemiah's ongoing struggle to enforce the Torah, a sure sign that for many the Law was by no means written upon their hearts as Jeremiah 31 had anticipated.

⁴⁸ For a helpful and balanced discussion of the twin perspectives among the returnees *viz* the so-called 'theocratic' and 'eschatological' perspectives, see Williamson (1985:li-*lii*).

According to Williamson (1982:5), 'The precise reason for the position of Chronicles at the end of the Hebrew Canon...remains unexplained, but within the context of the miscellaneous collection of which the third division, the Writings, is made up this need occasion no surprise.' The reason may simply be related to date of composition, but the obvious thematic parallel between Genesis and Chronicles suggests the possibility of a theological ordering. Both Genesis and Chronicles begin with creation and employ the genealogical form to trace the line of the promise from Adam via Seth to Jacob and his sons. And both books end 'with a prospect of redemption and a prophecy of a return to the land' (Dumbrell 1989:273). In the case of Genesis, the redemption and return to the land which is in prospect is the exodus, an event which will take place in due time in fulfilment of the promises that the LORD made to Abraham. In the case of Chronicles, the redemption and return to the land is the return from exile, an event which will take place in due time in accordance with the word of the LORD through the prophet Jeremiah. Thus the last word within the Hebrew Bible is a word of future expectation, an expectation which the books of Chronicles skilfully shape.

Chronicles begins with a series of genealogical tables (1 Chronicles 1-9) which focus in particular upon the genealogies of Judah and Levi, i.e., the royal and priestly lines which were of key interest to the post-exilic community. Furthermore we note that the movement of the genealogies from Adam via Seth, Abraham and Isaac to Israel and his descendants reinforces the idea that God's creation purposes will be brought about through his dealings with the nation of Israel, Abraham's descendants. Within the genealogical tables there is also a reference to Saul whose failed kingship and neglect of the ark of the LORD are discussed later (1 Chronicles 9:35-44; cf 10:1-13; 13:3). There is also a brief reference to the resettlement of Judah and particularly Jerusalem by those who returned from Babylon (9:1-34). Finally we note that within the genealogy there is a focus both on 'all Israel' and upon the city of Jerusalem, which city has a prominence throughout the books of Chronicles.

The narrative sections of Chronicles begin with a transition from Saul's failed kingship to

⁴⁹ See Williamson (1982) and the insightful summary by Dumbrell (1989:273-79).

David's rule and the capture of Jerusalem which becomes 'Zion, the city of David' (1 Chronicles 11:5). Unlike Saul, David does not neglect the ark of the LORD, but brings it to Jerusalem. This leads to plans for the building of the temple, God's promise to David regarding his own descendants and the eventual building of the Temple under Solomon, whose kingdom is established in accordance with God's promise and as a demonstration that Zion, the city of David, with its temple which symbolises the rule of the LORD, is indeed a world centre (1 Chronicles 13-2 Chronicles 9). Within this entire narrative section the primary focus lies not on David or Solomon *per se*, but upon the ark of the LORD, and on Jerusalem and its temple, the 'place of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, the footstool of our God' (1 Chronicles 28:2). Thus the focus is upon the kingdom of Yahweh over his people and the importance for their unity and blessing that this kingdom should not be opposed or rejected, but rather gladly welcomed (*cf* Dumbrell 1989:275-76). The ensuing narrative (2 Chronicles 10-36) shows however that Israel fail by and large to submit to the theocratic ideal. The division of the kingdom in the light of Rehoboam's foolishness (10:1-19) destroys the unity of Israel and even the later attempts at reunification centred upon a reformed temple worship under good kings such as Asa, Joash, Hezekiah and Josiah fail to reunite the nation or to bring lasting reformation. Continual refusal to show exclusive loyalty and obedience to Yahweh and his rule and a stubborn refusal to listen to his messengers the prophets, lead to the subjugation of Judah and Jerusalem and the eventual fall of the city and the kingdom under the Babylonians. But the book ends with a clear and unambiguous statement of hope - God's purposes still stand, and despite their rebellion, these purposes still involve in some way the people of Israel, the city of Jerusalem and the temple of 'the LORD, the God of Heaven' (2 Chronicles 36:23). Dumbrell's summary statement is worth quoting at length, for it highlights what in my opinion is the key-note of the post-exilic literature of the Old Testament, a key-note which is in keeping with the eschatological emphasis of the latter prophets:

Between 400 and 350 B.C. the Chronicler looked back to the program of Isaiah 40-55, to which the decree of Cyrus had called attention. That program had not been implemented, though the exile had historically ended. But this did not mean that the second exodus would not occur. Indeed, the recent efforts of the Ezra-Nehemiah period were attempts to implement the program. Chronicles injects a note of hope into a tired community. Yes, the physical exile has ended, and the future is now open-ended. The theology of Isaiah and the

measures taken by Ezra-Nehemiah point toward the future. The books of Chronicles refer to ideal, eschatological Israel. The notion of an ideal Israel under a theocracy, the model kingdom by which the world will be drawn, is thus presented by the Chronicler in a basic restatement of the older prophetic positions. God will not withdraw from his commitment to the world, a commitment given at creation and then affirmed through the call of Israel. Accordingly, the disappointments of the present, argues the Chronicler, must spawn a theology of hope.

(1989:279)

2.4. Conclusion

Robert Carroll began his discussion of *Deportation and Diasporic Discourses in the Prophetic Literature* by observing that ‘From Genesis to Chronicles [Hebrew Bible Grand Narrative], that is from the stories of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden to the moment when exiled Israel prepared to expel itself from Babylon to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple, individuals, families, folk and the people of Judah (Jews) existed in situations of varying degrees of deportation awaiting return’ (1997a:64). As we have noted above, Carroll thus takes the notion of return and the related idea of ‘homeland’ to be secondary to that of deportation and an ideological perspective of a rather limited grouping who had an inordinate influence on the canon. Carroll thus considers *deportation* rather than *exile*, which implies the possibility of return, to be the preferable terminology and perspective. Our own assessment of the ‘grand narrative of the Hebrew Bible’ albeit brief and inevitably selective, leads to a rather different paradigm namely that of a dialectic between *exile and return* on the one hand and *return and disappointment* on the other. That the Hebrew Bible as a whole, for all its variety of perspective, both warned of exile and promised return is in my opinion beyond dispute. But that the experience of return during the late 6th century B.C. left much to be desired and that it therefore spawned what we referred to above as ‘a theology of hope’ is also the clear testimony of those canonical writings which are set within the period following the return, a period which we thus mistakenly refer to as the *post-exilic* period.⁵⁰ Quite how that ‘theology of hope’ took

⁵⁰ Our use of the phrase post-exilic is primarily historically and geographically conditioned. Seen from a theological point of view in relation to the promises made in the scriptures of the pre-exilic and exilic period, the period following the physical return to Jerusalem was as we have seen still very much a time of exile and

shape and was appropriated by following generations of Jews living under foreign domination is a question to which we now turn.

3. Jewish Conceptions of Exile and Restoration in the Second Temple Period

3.1. *Introduction*

The questions of *definition* and of *unity* and *diversity* within so-called Second Temple or ‘middle’ Judaism (*cf* Wright 1992:147 note 1) is a question which has received a good deal of attention in recent years and one which, at least at the level of detailed discussion, cannot occupy our attention here.⁵¹ Two observations must however be made.

First, I want to affirm the rather obvious point that although there is a marked difference in the approach to the Biblical texts within Rabbinic writings on the one hand and the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha on the other, with the writings of the Qumran sect providing yet another approach (*cf* Stone 1984:XXI-XXII), the Biblical text did remain of fundamental importance within the period concerned. To quote Wright (1992:152): ‘We must never forget that the one book with which all Jews were familiar was of course the Bible.’ Our exclusion of it under the rubric of *Jewish* conceptions of exile and restoration is merely because we have already dealt with the Biblical texts in the previous section. However it is worth noting Wright’s further observation that we can not of course simply ‘....use the Old Testament as it stands as evidence for ‘what Jews believed’, or what they hoped for, in this period. It was read in particular ways, seen through particular grids of interpretation and anticipation. The Targums, translating the archaic Hebrew into contemporary Aramaic, and adding some explanatory material as they did so, eventually became a fixed tradition in their own right. A good many of the apocryphal and pseudepigraphical works, and of the Scrolls, consist in large part of new ways of reading the same old texts, of making them available to meet the needs of a new generation.’

thus a time of hope for future restoration.

⁵¹ See *inter alia* Hengel (1974); Nickelsburg & Stone (1981); Kraft & Nickelsburg (1986); Neusner (1990); Overman & Green (1992); Sanders (1992); Wright (1992:147-338); Vanderkam (2001).

Second, I want to affirm my agreement with Wright's conclusion after a closely argued survey of the material, that 'despite the wide variety of emphasis, praxis and literature for which we have ample evidence, which indeed justify us in speaking about 'Judaisms' in relation to this period, we can trace the outlines of a worldview, and a belief-system which can properly be thought of as mainline and which was shared by a large number of Jews at the time' (1992:338). Quite what place thinking about exile and restoration had within this 'mainline thinking' such as it was, is what we must now investigate on the basis of a brief survey of a selection of the relevant literature. This survey we will undertake using the categorisations employed in Stone (1984) and Charlesworth (1985).

3.2. *Exile, Restoration and the Narrative Literature of Second Temple Judaism*

According to Nickelsburg (1984:33) 'the post-exilic Jewish community produced a vast quantity of narrative literature' which had in common 'its setting in Israelite history in relation to situations and characters known from this history.' This material he acknowledges is difficult to classify with any real precision but can be loosely arranged into two overlapping categories. The first of these, typical of 'an older type of narrative' is 'loosely connected with the biblical traditions about Israel's past,' a connection involving 'little more than the historical setting (e.g. exile or diaspora) or some figure(s) from the past - a foreign king or a patriarch or a prophet.' 'These stories,' he continues, 'may also use biblical themes and may imitate biblical stories, but here the similarities cease.' The second category involves 'narratives that are closely related to the biblical texts, often expanding, paraphrasing, and implicitly commenting on them.' We will consider each of these categories in turn.

3.2.1. *Stories of Biblical and Early Post-Biblical Times*

Within this grouping, Nickelsburg includes *Daniel 1-6* (which we have already discussed above), *the Prayer of Nabonidus*, *Susanna*, *Bel and the Dragon*, *Tobit*, *Judith*, *The Martyrdom of Isaiah*, *The Lives of the Prophets*, *The Testament of Abraham*, *Joseph and Aseneth*, *the Paraleipomena of Jeremiah*, *the Epistle of Aristeas* and *3 Maccabees*. A number of points are worth mentioning in connection with our particular interest.

Firstly, none of the above writings, although originating in so-called *post*-exilic times show any sense that the great restoration prophecies of say Isaiah 40-66 or Ezekiel or Jeremiah have found fulfilment. The closest in this regard is perhaps *Aristeas* whose description of the liberation of the Jews in Egypt and idealistic depiction of the land of Jerusalem, its surrounds and its temple, together with the almost royal status of Eleazar the High Priest, the extraordinary wisdom of the 72 chosen Israelites (six from each of the implicitly re-united and restored tribes) and the joyous reception for and honour ascribed to the 'lawbooks of the Jews' (in context a synonym for the whole Jewish Bible) could be taken as indicative of a kind of 'accommodated Zion theology' - the Law flowing out to the nations from a glorious Jerusalem temple - on the part of a Jewish writer enjoying comparative comfort in Ptolemaic Alexandria and having great respect for and familiarity with Hellenistic wisdom. The clearly Hellenistic flavour of much of the content and style, its slightly syncretistic view of God and truth (wisdom) despite its high esteem for the Jewish Law, may however militate against such a view.⁵² The author of the work may, as Nickelsburg (1984:79) expresses it, in fact merely be 'counselling rapprochement without assimilation' as a guide to a pattern of life within the Diaspora. This would then imply that the author, like the authors of e g, *Susanna*, *Bel*, *Tobit* etc, saw the exilic condition of the people of Israel as continuing to his own day.

Second, we note that for a number of the above writings, the question of the maintenance of righteousness and loyalty to Yahweh in the midst of foreign and often hostile peoples is of great importance. Daniel and his friends, Joseph, Susanna, Tobit, Judith, the remnant of the Jews in Alexandria - all maintain their trust in the LORD in various situations of exile (Babylon, Assyria, Egypt and in the case of Judith, a rebuilt but endangered Jerusalem). In each case these righteous men and women freely acknowledge that their situation of exile and oppression is due to God's righteous and just wrath against his rebellious people, both past and present. And in each case they are delivered from the schemes of their enemies, both Gentile and renegade Jew, in answer to prayer and the intervention of Yahweh. But does righteousness automatically imply deliverance from death? The *martyrdom of Isaiah* and the *Testament of Abraham* suggest otherwise and point beyond deliverance in this life to heavenly bliss and rest in the presence of the LORD and his holy ones. Here again, the context seems to indicate a perception of continuing

⁵² See Shutt (1985:7-11); Nickelsburg (1984:75-80).

exile on the part of the author's of these works as does the fact that they wrote stories whose setting was exilic.

Thirdly, we note that in the case of at least one of the abovementioned writings, viz *Tobit*, there is a clear statement to the effect that even though a return to Jerusalem has taken place and the temple rebuilt, the time of fulfilment of God's promises and the restoration of his people still lies in the future. Tobit, an exile in Nineveh, looks forward to the day when judgement will be meted out against the enemies of 'the ever-living God and his kingdom', when the LORD's sanctuary will be rebuilt, the dispersed people of Israel gathered again as one united people and Jerusalem established as the centre of world blessing (13:1-18). The depiction of such a future hope on the part of an author living within the Second Temple period is striking enough. Even more striking however is the observation concerning the exiles in 14:5-8 that 'God will have mercy on them again and will bring them back to the land of Israel. They will rebuild the house of God, but not as it was before, not until the time of fulfilment comes. Then they will return from their captivity and rebuild Jerusalem gloriously; then indeed the house will be built in her as the prophets foretold. All the nations of the world will be converted to the true worship of God; they will abandon their idols which led them astray into falsehood, and praise the eternal God according to his law. All the Israelites who survive at that time and are firm in their loyalty to God will be brought together; they will come to Jerusalem to take possession of the land of Abraham, and live there forever in safety....' (NEB). For the author of these words, penned perhaps from within the Diaspora circa late 3rd or early 2nd century BC (cf Nickelsburg 1984:45), the time of release from captivity and the restoration depicted within prophetic eschatology remains a real, but still future hope.

3.2.2. *The Bible Rewritten and Expanded.*

Under this category of Jewish narrative Nickelsburg (1984:89-152) includes narrative literature 'that is very closely related to the biblical texts, expanding and paraphrasing them and implicitly commenting on them,' a tendency of following the ancient texts more closely which 'may be seen as a reflection of their developing canonical status' (1989:89). A number of books are listed by Nickelsburg including sections of *1 Enoch*, the *Genesis Apocryphon*, the *Book of Biblical Antiquities* (*Pseudo-Philo*), the *Books of Adam and Eve* (*Vita* and the *Apocalypse of Moses*),

three Judeo-Hellenistic Fragments (*Philo the Epic Poet*, *Theodotus* and *Ezekiel the Tragedian*), a selection of works from the Apocrypha (*Jubilees*, *Additions to Esther*, *Baruch*, *The Letter of Jeremiah*, *The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Young Men*, *1 Esdras 3-4*). We will focus our attention on *Jubilees* and *Baruch*.

Before turning our attention to these works however, it is relevant for our purposes to note the observation of Harrington (1985:301) concerning *Pseudo-Philo* that ‘the Deuteronomistic concept of history (sin-punishment-salvation) is found in 3:9f ;12:4; 13:10; and 19:2-5.’ This certainly concurs with the book’s interest in and emphasis upon the period of the Judges. According to Nickelsburg (1984:107-109): ‘Two tendencies in the *Biblical Antiquities* are consonant with this concentration on the book of Judges. The first relates to the historical pattern of Judges: sin; divine punishment by means of an enemy; repentance; salvation through a divinely appointed leader....In presenting this theme, the author often raises the question: Can Israel survive the present onslaught of its enemies?’⁵³ His affirmative answer is rooted in Israel’s status as the chosen covenant people of God....The second tendency in the *Biblical Antiquities* relates to the manner in which the book of Judges organizes history around great Israelite leaders....’ Nickelsburg concludes that ‘The message of the *Biblical Antiquities* is probably found in the two tendencies we have just described. The content of the many speeches put on the lips of the leaders of Israel functions as a kind of kerygma: Israel is God’s people chosen already before creation (60:2); therefore, even when their very existence is threatened, God’s covenant fidelity will deliver them.’ Amongst the numerous other key themes found in this work and later reflected in Jewish tradition (*cf* Harrington 1985:300-01) these reminders of covenant and leadership, of Israel’s sins and oppression and of their repentance and deliverance, would have been of profound importance for a people assailed on every side by hostile forces and alluring temptations, suffering perhaps at the hands of a self-serving and oppressive leadership and longing for the day of better things.⁵⁴

⁵³ See e.g., 9:3; 12:8; 18:10-11; 19:9; 30:4; 35:3; 49:3.

⁵⁴ On a possible pre AD 70 date for *Pseudo-Philo* see Harrington (1985:299). The reference to the ‘house that will be destroyed because they will sin against me’ (12:4) is probably a reference to the destruction of the First Temple in 587 BC. *Cf* Nickelsburg (1984:109).

The book of Jubilees claims to be the account ‘of the Division of the Days of the Law and the Testimony for annual observance according to their Weeks, their Jubilees throughout all the Years of the World’ (*cf* Wintermute 1985:41, 52). After an important opening chapter which ‘places the narrative of chaps. 2-50 in a new context compared with Genesis-Exodus’ (VanderKam 1992:1031), the book takes the form of first person narrative recited by an ‘angel of the presence’ recounting the primeval history of humankind and the history of God’s chosen people until the time of Moses. The narrative temporal boundaries of the account are however specified in God’s initial direct address to the ‘angel of the presence’ as ‘from the first creation until my sanctuary is built in their midst forever and ever’ (1:27).⁵⁵ The overall content of the book consists of a modified and interpreted account of Genesis 1-Exodus 19 in which a number of key interests, especially those pertaining to *halakhoth*,⁵⁶ are set out. It is clear that for the author obedience to the covenant (as interpreted in particular terms) is of paramount importance. Two aspects of the book are of particular significance for our purposes.

The *first* is the fact that the first chapter, which, as we noted above, is intended to orientate the reader / hearer, is clearly ‘Deuteronomic’ in emphasis. All the characteristic features are present - Israel as a stubborn and rebellious people (1:7-11), God’s appeal through the prophets and the rejection of that appeal (1:12), judgement and exile among the nations (1:13), repentance, restoration from exile and the presence of the LORD in their midst in a re-built (?) sanctuary (1:15-18). Furthermore in this new era the hearts of the people will be fully turned to the LORD (1:22-25). Given that this rebuilt sanctuary and restored people is the goal and endpoint of all sacred history (1:27) and given the emphasis on a return to the ‘way of righteousness’ as the author’s own primary concern, it would thus seem that the book depicts Israel as ‘still in exile’ and in need of repentance to hasten the time of restoration and the rebuilt sanctuary. The *second* fact to note is that according to the book, the time of the exodus and the giving of the Law is at the end of the ‘forty-nine jubilees, one week and two years’ (i.e., 2410 years from Adam) and the

⁵⁵ This emphasis on the building of the ‘sanctuary’ may well be the key to understanding the striking priestly orientation of much of the book, not least the priority given to Levi among the sons of Jacob (*cf* VanderKam 1992:1030-31).

⁵⁶ See VanderKam (2001:98-99); Nickelsburg (1984:97-101); Wintermute (1985:46-48).

time of the entry into the land 40 years later. This means that the land is entered after 2450 years, that is, at the end of the 50th jubilee. Thus as VanderKam (2001:99) points out ‘the author places two crucial events in this fiftieth jubilee period: the freeing of the Israelite slaves from Egypt (the exodus) and restoration to them of their ancestral land.’ VanderKam’s use of the term ‘restoration of their land’ is entirely correct for in Jubilees the principle of antedating applies not just to the Patriarchs’ possession of and obedience to key aspects of the Law, but also to the land Canaan itself which is described as having been given to Shem, but stolen by Canaan (Jubilees 8-10). Thus the entry into the land is not conquest of a new land, but restoration to the homeland lost. Furthermore according to 50:4-5, the forty years before ‘restoration’ are so that Israel may learn the commands of the LORD and be purified from defilement, sin and error. Thus those who hear the words of Jubilees are to know that the LORD’s judgements upon them are justified, but that they are not final (1:5-6). The LORD has not abandoned them forever and will restore their fortunes; they in their turn however are to repent and return to the true covenant as depicted in the book (1:20-21). For the author’s generation then, the time of restoration depicted as ‘re-entry into the land’ and closely associated with the ideal sanctuary still lies in the future.⁵⁷

The book of Baruch

The ‘book of Baruch’ as it is termed in 1:1 has as its setting the land of Babylon where Baruch, now depicted not as Jeremiah’s scribe but as a pious leader, is living among the exiles. The time at which the book is read before Jeconiah (=Jehoiachin) and the rest of the exiles is ‘in the fifth year after the Chaldeans had captured and burnt Jerusalem’ (1:2), *circa* 582BC. The response to the book, the content of which has not yet been given, is contrition on the part of the exiles and the collection money and the stolen silver vessels reputedly made for the temple by Zedekiah after the initial deportation and plundering of the temple. The aim of the collection and return of the vessels is described in *Baruch* 1: 10-13. The survivors in Jerusalem are to buy offerings to offer on the altar of the LORD and to pray for long life for Nebuchadnezzar and his son and that the exiles will be able to ‘walk in the light’ (1:12), that is, live by the demands of the Torah (*cf*

⁵⁷ Betsy Halpern-Amaru (1997:127-28) is thus correct to say that ‘the author of this pseudepigraphic work attempts to extend the perimeters of covenant theology such that they embrace his own time.’ But she is incorrect in my opinion to suggest that ‘from his post-exilic, indeed post return, perspective loss and recovery of Land are no longer central theological issues.’ From Jubilees perspective, the land does matter and is only seen as recovered when the ideal sanctuary is built and the LORD dwells in the midst of his people.’

4:1) during their clearly prolonged exile. Despite the claims of scholars, the phrase ‘the altar of the LORD’ does not necessarily imply an existing temple, merely the continuation of the cultus among the survivors in Judah (*contra* VanderKam 2001:123). Nor, as Nickelsburg (1984:143-44) points out, do the similarities between Baruch’s prescribed prayer and the prayer in Daniel 9, overrule differences between the two or necessarily imply literary dependence. The Deuteronomic tone of the entire book and the connections with the book of Jeremiah could well account for the content of the prayer as would a common tradition underlying both Baruch and Daniel. Thus certainty regarding the dating and provenance of the book and certainly of any Hebrew *Vorlage* underlying 1:1-3:8 remains illusive (*cf* Nickelsburg 1984:145-46). The received opinion seems to be that the book has its origins sometime in the second century BC.

What is clearly not uncertain is the very strong Deuteronomic tone of the book. Thus Nickelsburg (1984:140) comments of the unity of the book in its present form by pointing out that the four subsections of diverse origin ‘are bound together by the common theme of Exile and Return, which is often expressed in Biblical idiom.’ Likewise VanderKam concludes his discussion of the book by stating that ‘one point that emerges clearly from the book is that for many Jews of the second temple period the exile did not simply end at the time of the first return described in Ezra 1. Exile was a state that continued’ (2001:124). That this was the case can be seen not only from the repeated declaration regarding the justness of the exile (1:15-22; 2:9-10) but also from the appeal to those in Jerusalem to pray that the exiles would indeed be able to live under their captives in a way which honours the LORD (1:12-13; 3:7-8) whose dwelling is beyond all national boundaries and which extends even to Babylon (3:24). In this regard a comparison between Jeremiah 29 and Baruch is very striking. In the former Jeremiah writes to the exiles that the exile will be long and that they are to settle down and to pray for the prosperity of their captors. In Baruch a letter comes from Babylon asking the Jerusalem survivors to pray that same prayer. A third indication of the truth of VanderKam’s assessment can be found in the phrases ‘to this very day’ (1:15) and ‘until now’ (1:19). Most noteworthy about these terms is not just that they clearly are inclusive of the author’s own time (*cf* Scott 1997b:187), but that they are to be said by the survivors in Jerusalem - though they are technically in the land, they like the exiles in Babylon are to speak about themselves as being in exile ‘to this very day’. Not that these declarations of ongoing exile, negate the notion of future return, as the end of the book makes abundantly clear (4:21-5:9). But they do imply that for the author the return and the restoration

which accompanies it is a future hope, not a present reality.

3.3. *Exile, Restoration and Jewish Historiography*

That ‘the Jews of the Hellenistic and early imperial periods evidenced a lively interest in their past’ can, as Attridge (1984:157) points out, be clearly seen from the fact that ‘the narrative literature of the period which rehearsed one or other aspect of the past was enormous.’ Some of that narrative literature has already been dealt with in the previous sections under a classification other than historiography, although we should bear in mind that all such classifications are in reality fluid and are in a very real sense in the eye of the classifier. Under the category of ‘historiography’ we will focus our attention, following the classifications of Attridge (1984) and VanderKam (2001:59-69), upon three works, two of which stand broadly in the tradition of Biblical historiography (*1 Esdras* and *1 Maccabees*) and one which stands, alongside of the works of Josephus, more in the traditions of Greek historiography (*2 Maccabees*).⁵⁸

1 Esdras

The apocryphal book *1 Esdras* (LXX - *3 Esdras* in Vulgate) tells the story of Judah from the celebration of the Passover feast in the repaired temple at Jerusalem by King Josiah, according to the ‘book of Moses’ and the ‘ordinances of David’ (cf 1:1-22) until the reading and explanation of the ‘law of Moses given by the Lord God of Israel’ (9:40 NEB) to the gathered multitude of priests, Levites and Israelites on the ‘new moon of the seventh month’ (the Feast of Booths) outside the rebuilt Temple. It thus tells the story of Judah’s decline, exile and restoration. The theme of wholeheartedness on the part of all the returned exiles is also stressed, for when confronted by Ezra over the issue of ‘mixed marriages’ they *all* respond positively (8:91-9:17). The fact of the mixed marriages and the response of Ezra to this fact underlines, as does canonical Ezra-Nehemiah, that after the return and the rebuilding of the Temple, things were far from right among the returned exiles. Certainly Ezra is depicted as using the language of ongoing

⁵⁸ See Attridge (1984:157-58). As Attridge correctly observes, *1 Esdras* could easily be classified as a Biblical addition, although it is more of a translation into Greek of texts from Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah with the addition of some legendary material and cast into a broadly Biblical-historiographical form. Attridge also includes some fragmentary material within his collection (e.g. *Demetrius*, *Eupolemus*, *Artapanus* and *Pseudo-Hecataeus*), but we will not deal with these.

exile to describe the situation (8:75-90). The book does however end on a positive note. It may well be, in terms of the overall literary structure of the book, that there is an *inclusio* formed by the two Passover celebrations in 1:1 and 7:10-15. A parallel is thus drawn between the repair of the temple under Josiah and the rebuilding of the temple under Zerubbabel who, in the light of the story of the bodyguards (3:1-4:63), is a primary character within the narrative. Is the author thus presenting Zerubbabel as a Josiah-like figure, who in both Chronicles and 1 Esdras outstrips even David in the celebration of the feast (1:20-22)? The account of the arrival of Ezra, his distress at the mixed marriages and his reading and explanation of the Law to the people may thus demonstrate a conviction by the author that even with so great a king as Zerubbabel at the head of the people, it is ultimately only *theocracy* mediated through the hearing and understanding of the Torah, that will finally bring full restoration to the nation. In the account of the testing of the bodyguards, Zerubbabel may well be seen to be affirming this very point, though in language which in the hearing of the pagan king depicts what the reader knows (or ought in the opinion of the author to know) as Torah in terms of the traditional category of 'dame Wisdom' (4:34-41). If this is indeed the case, then the author of the work, writing as he does in the period of the Second Temple, may well be asserting that it is not temple *per se*, but rather the Law heard, understood and received, which brings true joy and restoration to the people of God.

1 Maccabees

1 Maccabees is a striking and invaluable account of the history of the Hasmonean family from the outbreak of the revolt against the religious persecution by Antiochus Epiphanes (167 BC) (1 Maccabees 2) to the end of the reign of Simon (134 BC) and the early days of the reign of his son John (16:23-24). It is in effect an account of holy war - a war for the liberation of Jerusalem, its temple and 'the faithful remnant' who are identified within the book as *Israel* in distinction from the gentiles and renegade Jews who are depicted as ungodly (traitors to the covenant of the LORD) and thus worthy of death. Both the overall context of the book and specific declarations within the book show that the author perceived Israel still to be in a state of exile and bondage, even though the return under Zerubbabel had long since happened and the temple had been rebuilt. Most striking among the declarations of continuing exile within the book are the statements made concerning Jerusalem by Mattathias (2:7-11) and Judas (3:45) respectively in the early part of the narrative. This perspective is shared by the narrator himself (1:25-28, 37-40).

Also striking is the way in which the deliverance brought about by Matthias, Judas and their successors is so often couched in terms of the traditional holy war imagery of the Hebrew Bible including the zeal of Phineas (2:26), the Exodus (3:8-9) and David's victory of Goliath (4:30). Zeal for the Law and trust in the Divine Warrior will lead to deliverance for the people of God. The author is strongly *pro-Hasmonean* and clearly perceived the exploits of particularly Judas and Simon to be the path to the reversal of the fortunes of faithful, but oppressed Israel. In the light of the inscription which was placed on a monument on Mt Zion (14:27-47) remembering the oppression, the deliverance and the exploits of Simon in particular, it is probably fair to say that the author detected in Simon, a model deliverer and judge as of old in the days of Samuel, both priest and judge over the people on behalf of God, the archetype of those 'to whom it was granted to bring deliverance to Israel' (5:62). It is thus striking that the inscription records that Simon should hold this office 'until a true prophet shall appear' (14:41-42). This phrase echoes the statement in 4:46 where Judas and his troops are said to have taken the stones of the altar of the burnt offering and placed them 'in a fitting place on the temple hill until a prophet should arise who could be consulted about them.' Thus the exploits of Matthias, Judas, Jonathan and Simon, great though they were, are not seen, even by so sympathetic an author, as the time of the final restoration of Israel.⁵⁹ This restoration would be preceded by the coming of 'a prophet' possibly the Elijah-like prophet who would usher in the LORD's own coming to his temple to cleanse and reconsecrate his temple so that it might be as in the days of old (*cf* Malachi 3:1-4)

2 Maccabees

The bulk of 2 Maccabees consists of a epitome of a 5 book work by Jason of Cyrene describing 'the history of Judas Maccabaeus and his brothers, the purification of the great temple and the dedication of the altar' as well as 'the battles with Antiochus Epiphanes and with his son Eupator and the apparitions from heaven which appeared to those who vied with one another in fighting manfully for Judaism' (2 Maccabees 2:19-21). This epitome, in which '....theological lessons drawn from history dominate the presentation of events' (Attridge 1984:181), does preserve important historical information, such as details about the Hellenizing process which took place

⁵⁹ While this is the case, it is clear that the author views the Hasmonean dynasty as the only legitimate and God appointed rule until the coming of the prophet. Thus other would be deliverers are dismissed as illegitimate, a point underlined by their failure or complicity with enemies (e.g., 5:55-62; 7:13-17).

prior to the persecution of the Jews and the Maccabean revolt as well as a series of letters which appear 'to throw light on the closing stages of the revolt' (Attridge 1984:182; *cf* Fischer 1992:444; VanderKam 2001:66). In the preface and conclusion to the epitome, the anonymous epitomizer declares that his aim has been to produce a factual but entertaining work, but a comparison of the epitome with what the epitomizer says to have been the content of Jason's work shows that the work has a definite purpose in mind. Only Judas' exploits are in fact discussed, and these in *theological ideological* terms which present Judas in judge-like fashion, Divinely appointed but devoid of formal office or recognition. Thus not only are the exploits of the other Hasmoneans ignored, but the characteristic legitimization of the Hasmonean dynasty in 1 Maccabees 5:62 is omitted although other details of the Maccabean revolt are shared with 1 Maccabees. This exclusive emphasis on Judas and the style of presentation may well reflect an ambivalence or even hostility on the part of the author to the later Hasmoneans such as John Hyrcanus or Alexander Jannaeus (*cf* Attridge 1984:177). Indeed double request for the Jews in Egypt to honour the feast of the purification of the temple contained in the two prefatory letters, irrespective of their dates of origin,⁶⁰ may well function (from the epitomizer's perspective) as a necessary reminder of the need for a purified temple as in the halcyon days of Judas. If this is the case, then the prayer in 2:24-29, reputedly prayed at the time of the rebuilding of the temple under Nehemiah and by implication prayed again at the time of the re-consecration of the temple under Judas, may well reflect the author's own desire to see the exile finally brought to an end through the gathering of the remnant 'from every part of the world to the holy temple' (2:18). What is striking is that the statement in 2:16-18 that 'God has saved his whole people and granted to all of us the holy land, the kingship, the priesthood and the consecration, as he promised by the law' does not imply that a final restoration has occurred but rather that such a restoration will soon take place, for the statement concludes 'we have confidence that he will soon be merciful to us and gather us from every part of the world to the holy temple'.

3.4. *Exile, Restoration and Jewish Apocalyptic Literature*

Given that the term 'apocalyptic' has been applied to a *genre of literature*, a *collection of writings*, a *worldview* and a *movement* (*cf* Stone 1984:392-94; Charlesworth 1983:3), it follows

⁶⁰ See Fischer (1992:444) *contra* Attridge (1984:177-78).

that a variety of writings of the Second Temple period could be both classed as ‘apocalyptic’ or be said to contain sections which are apocalyptic. Thus e.g, Charlesworth (1983) and VanderKam (2001) include the *Sibylline Oracles* under the category of ‘Apocalyptic Literature’ while Stone (1984) gives these separate treatment.⁶¹ Since our concern is not to debate the finer points of the categorization of Jewish literature or even to provide an exhaustive survey of its contents, we will employ Charlesworth’s basic selection (See Charlesworth 1983:vi-vii) but refine our focus even more by concentrating in particular on selections from *1 Enoch* (*The Apocalypse of Weeks*, *the Similitudes* and the so-called *Book of Dreams*), *the Sibylline Oracles* (Book 3), *2 Baruch*, and *4 Ezra* .

1 Enoch

The First book of Enoch (Ethiopic Enoch) has been described by Nickelsburg (1992:508) as ‘a collection of traditions and writings composed between the 4th century B.C.E. and the turn of the era,⁶² mainly in the name of Enoch, the son of Jared (Gen 5:21-24).’ Stone (1984:396) describes the corpus as ‘a compilation of five books, each of which appears with its own title and usually its own conclusion’ (Stone 1984:396). The Ethiopic version is the only extant version in which the five books are combined into a single work. Fragments discovered at Qumran suggest that the original language of the books was Aramaic. In keeping with the fact that ‘Jewish apocalypses are pseudepigraphs’ and that those which survey Biblical history ‘present it in the form of a prediction’ (VanderKam 2001:103), the collection in *1 Enoch* claims to be a series of revelations which Enoch received and passed on to his son Methuselah for the benefit of the righteous who would live in the end times. Of particular interest with regard to the theme of exile and restoration are two of the ‘historical apocalypses’ (VanderKam 2001:103), viz *The Apocalypse of Weeks* (*1 Enoch* 93:1-10; 91:11-17) and *The Book of Dreams* (particularly the *Animal Apocalypse* *1 Enoch* 85-90).

Discussing both of these sections of *1 Enoch* as part of an essay on ‘Exile in Jewish Apocalyptic

⁶¹ Similar discrepancies occur with regard to *Testament of Moses*. See VanderKam (2001) *contra* Charlesworth (1983) and Stone (1984).

⁶² Nickelsburg’s dating of the *Book of the Luminaries* in the Persian period differs significantly from that of Isaac (1983:5). This leads to a different view of the order of composition (*cf* Nickelsburg 1992:509).

Literature' (1997:89-109), VanderKam highlights the fact that in each of these sections of 1 Enoch the exile appears to be 'a continuing state' (1997:94). According to *the Apocalypse of Weeks*, history from the time of Enoch up to and including the eschatological judgement can be divided into ten weeks.⁶³ The first week is the time of Enoch's birth, as the seventh generation from Adam, a time of righteousness (93:3-4). This is followed by the growth of wickedness in the second week and the emergence of Noah and the 'first consummation', viz the Flood (93:4). The following weeks are difficult to classify as are the various 'men' who play key roles. It seems clear however that, given the reference to the 'house of the kingdom' being burnt and the 'whole chosen root' being dispersed that the 'house', built during the fifth week is the first temple⁶⁴ and that the events of the sixth week thus refer to the Babylonian exile. If this is the case and VanderKam argues that it is, then it is striking that there is no reference to any return or rebuilding, but only to ongoing apostasy (week seven) on the one hand, and the 'election of the ones of righteousness' to whom are given sevenfold instruction or wisdom concerning his flock. This is a reference to the author's own generation, with wisdom in all likelihood referring to the books of Enoch themselves (*cf* 104:12-105:2; Nickelsburg 1992:511). This means that the reference to the judgement of sinners at the hands of the righteous in the eighth week, the building of a house for the Great King, followed by the world judgement and the new creation during weeks nine and ten (91:11-17) should all be taken to refer to the eschaton, expressed perhaps in Isaianic terms. While it is possible to see this 'house for the Great King' as a reference to the second temple, seen in idealistic terms by the author and thus also legitimizing hostility against an 'apostate generation' in his own day, the majority of scholars see it as a reference to the eschatological temple which would form the centre of the new Jerusalem and New Creation (*cf* Nickelsburg 1992:511). VanderKam (1997:96) thus concludes that 'in no place in the *Apocalypse of Weeks* does a return from exile receive mention. The clear implication is that for the author the situation of exile never ended from the fall of Jerusalem until his time in the early mid second century BCE. Moreover, that condition is not destined to end, it seems, until the last judgement.'

⁶³ See VanderKam (2001:104) for a highly insightful discussion of the 'weeks', the role of the number 'seven' and the symmetrical structure of the ten weeks.

⁶⁴ The statement 'a house and a kingdom will be built' may well be a reference to the twin 'building' of a dynasty for David and a house for the LORD as found in 2 Samuel 7.

The *Animal Apocalypse* forms the major part of the *Book of Dreams* (1 Enoch 83-90), the fourth book in the Ethiopic collection. In this, the second of two dream visions, Enoch sees a vision of what turns out to be all of sacred history, from the time of the Patriarchs (white or dark bovids depending on whether they are part of the chosen line or not) until the time of a ram with a great horn (Judas Maccabaeus - the last historical referent) who delivers 'the sheep' (Israel) from their oppressors. Following this is the period of eschatological judgement, the building of a new and glorious house (90:28-29-A new Jerusalem which unlike the first and the rebuilt Jerusalem has no high tower)⁶⁵ and the vindication and glorification of the righteous (90:30-39).

The reign of Solomon and building of the first temple is described in 89:48-50, with the temple as the focal point as 'a elevated and lofty tower' on which the 'Lord of the sheep stood' and where 'a full table' was offered before him. Following this the sheep begin to stray and are warned by 'some among the sheep' (89:52) including the prophet Elijah who ascends to the heavens and joins Enoch (89:53). The national apostasy continues and the Lord of the sheep hands them over to the wild beasts, eventually leaving his house. The Lord of the sheep then hands the sheep over to 'seventy shepherds' who are permitted to destroy but who remain accountable to the Lord of the sheep (89:59-66). There is some confusion about the identity of these shepherds. VanderKam (2001:106) suggests that they are the patrons of the Gentile nations, seventy being the traditional number of the Gentile nations based on Genesis 10. This would certainly accord with the prophetic oracles which hold the nations accountable for their treatment of Israel during the exilic period, though the possible equation of the number of shepherds with their periods of rule may suggest that seventy is related to the decreed period of the exile.⁶⁶ What is particularly significant for our investigation is the fact that the rule of the shepherds which seems to be consecutive (*cf* 89:68), extends beyond the return and rebuilding described in 90:72-77. Indeed, the description of the returnees as 'dim-witted' and the sacrifice associated with the rebuilt temple as 'polluted and impure' confirms that this return and rebuilding does not deal

⁶⁵ The description in 90:28-29 is curious because it uses language which may well be associated with the temple. Perhaps the idea is that the temple and city are coterminous, with the high tower, the Holy of Holies, being replaced by the presence of the Lord of the sheep.

⁶⁶ Isaac in the marginal notes on 90:1 that the thirty-seven shepherds could as Charles suggested be emended to read thirty-five. Together with the twenty-three of 90:5, this would then equate the total number of shepherds and the period of the periods of their rule over the flock, *viz* fifty-eight.

with the fundamental problem facing the sheep. Thus beyond the rebuilding, the sheep continue to be delivered to the shepherds for destruction (89:75), with the 'post return' period in fact being worse than any which has preceded it (*cf* VanderKam 1997:99-100) and is brought to an end only by the final and decisive intervention of the Lord of the sheep himself.⁶⁷ It would thus seem that VanderKam (1997:100) is correct when he concludes that 'the time of the Babylonian exile was merely the first part...of a larger and longer lasting phenomenon - the cruel reign of the seventy shepherds which would continue to the imminent end. The word *exile* never surfaces in the symbolic narrative of the Animal Apocalypse, but the language of dispersion is used and continues to be used even after the end of the historical exile....For the author, exile was an ongoing condition that would soon end with the final judgement.'

The Sibylline Oracles (Book 3)

Unlike the *Apocalypse of Weeks* and the *Animal Apocalypse*, the *Sibylline Oracles (Book 3)*, a piece of apocalyptic-like Jewish Hellenistic writing embedded in a lengthy and diverse Greek work apparently views the exile as a 'historical event of limited duration' (VanderKam 1997:91). The relevant material is found in the third of five oracles which make up the main corpus of the book (Collins 1983:354), an oracle in vss 196-294 describing the Babylonian exile and restoration. This oracle forms part of four oracles which 'present a recurring sequence of (1) sin (usually idolatry) which leads to (2) disaster and tribulation, which is terminated by (3) the advent of a king or a kingdom' (Collins 1984:366), the first of the five oracles being quite different and thus probably introductory in function. The Sibyl, having expounded various woes that will come upon 'all men' then focusses attention upon the 'pious men who live around the great temple of Solomon, and who are the offspring of righteous men' (3:210-14). Upon these pious men, declares the Sibyl, 'evil will come....' The nature of the evil is described in 3:265 against the backdrop of the giving of the Law at Sinai, 'just ordinances upon two tablets' which they are enjoined to perform or pay the penalty (3:255-64). The evil is flight away from the very

⁶⁷ The post return period until the eschaton seems to be made up of the reign of twenty -three and twelve shepherds respectively, the rule of the latter being the worst of the entire span of seventy and thus provoking the Lord of the sheep finally to intervene.

The *Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch* or 2 Baruch as it has become known is a post AD 70 Jewish work with varied contents consisting of 'lamentations, prayers, questions with answers, apocalypses with explanations, addresses to the people and a letter to the Jews in the Dispersion' (Klijn 1983:615). The setting of the work is the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 BC, although Baruch's address to the people after the revelation of the 'twelve calamities' evidences knowledge of the destruction of the Second Temple (32:1-5). Indeed the words of 32:2-5 are a striking summary of the author's perspective of exile and restoration. 'Zion will be shaken in order that it will be rebuilt. That building will not remain; but it will again be uprooted after sometime and will remain desolate for a time. And after that it is necessary that it will be renewed in glory and that it will be perfected into eternity.'⁶⁹ Thus Baruch concludes that the people who are experiencing the devastation of the loss of the temple (the first temple in the literary setting but the second temple in the author's own time), should 'not be sad regarding the evil which has come now, but much more regarding that which is in the future', that is, the period of woe and eschatological judgement. For, says Baruch, 'greater than the *two evils* will be the trial when the Mighty One will renew his creation [*italics mine*]' (32:6-7). The author thus sees his own situation as one of ongoing dispersion and exile, and communicates to his readers the perspective with which they should see this reality. Yes, there is a place for sadness and lamentation, but the reality of the dispersion is for the 'good of the nations' and the 'chastisement of God's people' (1:4-5) and it will ultimately end in the time of eschatological judgement and salvation when the dead are raised. It is thus with a view to this day, that those who are now exiled have nothing 'apart from the Mighty One and his law' (85:3). Thus, says Baruch, both to the remnant in the land and to the exiles, 'If we dispose and direct our hearts, we shall receive everything that we have lost by many times. For that which we lost was subject to corruption, but that which we receive will not be corruptible' (85:4-5).

⁶⁹ See the evaluation of the Second Temple in 68:2-7 where it is said that Zion will be rebuilt and the offerings will be restored, and 'the nations will again come to honour it, but not as before.' Cf also 64:5 and 67:1-2 where the disaster during the eleventh black water may well refer to the destruction of the temple in the authors time and leads to the tribulation of the final time before the end.

4 *Ezra* also adopts the exile as its setting (3:1) and like 2 *Baruch* was in all likelihood written to address the situation after the destruction of the temple in AD 70 (cf VanderKam 1997:107). The book is made up of seven visions in which 'the first three are dialogues between the seer and the angel; the next three are symbolic visions; and the last one (chap 14) is a narrative of the revelation of the sacred books to Ezra' (Stone 1984:412). The Dialogues mentioned in the first three visions concern the meaning of the destruction of the Temple and the issues it raises. Why did Babylon gain dominion over Zion (3:29)? Are the deeds of Babylonian better than those of Zion (3:32)? Why has God given his one people who have the law over to the Gentiles who despise it (5:28)? Does God hate his people, and if so, should his punishment involve those who are also wicked? Why does Israel not possess the world that has been created for them and how long will this remain the case (6:59)? In response to each of these questions, the angel points Ezra to the coming end of the age, a time of eschatological judgement and woe but also a time when 'the humiliation of Zion will be complete' (6:20), when 'faithfulness shall flourish and corruption shall be overcome' (6:27-28) and when those who have passed through the tribulation of this age will enter the safety of that which is greater (7:10-14).

According to Stone (1984:413), 'the three symbolic visions which follow the dialogues are very different from them' yet are, 'in the final analysis, the answers to the questions raised in the dialogues.' In the first of these (the fourth vision in the book), Ezra is reminded of the fact that though the fathers received the Law, they did not keep it and consequently perished. He then sees a woman, weeping and disconsolate because of the death of her son (unknown to Ezra a symbol of fallen Jerusalem) who before his eyes is transformed into 'an established city', a place of 'huge foundations' (10:27). The meaning of the vision is that fallen and desolate Zion will be established, and that by the Most High himself, a city of no man's building (10:53-54). The second vision (the fifth of the book) concerns the reign of the kingdoms spoken about by Daniel and the coming of the Davidic Messiah, who will judge the wicked and save a remnant among God's people making them joyful until the end comes (12:31-34). The final vision of the three (the sixth of the book) concerns a young man arising from the sea and flying with the clouds of heaven (13:1-4). This young man is identified with the Messiah mentioned in 12:32, and will gather the dispersed ten tribes (13:39-48) and bring salvation to the righteous remnant, among

whom 'Ezra' is numbered (13:48-50). Thus the return from exile takes place exclusively at the end of ages. The focus of the final vision in the book is upon Ezra's restoration of the scriptures in which 'is the spring of understanding, the fountain of wisdom, and the river of knowledge' (14:47) and which are to be taken as the author's final testament by which to reprove 'those who are now living' and the ones who will be born afterward, viz a generation in exile awaiting the time of their restoration.

In concluding this discussion of Jewish Apocalyptic it is worth noting the words of VanderKam:

In conclusion it may be said that the concept of exile in the Jewish apocalypses is treated in various ways, just as it is in the Hebrew Bible. One general inference that can be drawn is that the historical return, even if the apocalyptic authors mention it, is usually considered of little importance⁷⁰....Almost all the apocalypses do refer to a return [although] the Apocalypse of Weeks does not....and 4 Ezra sees a return occurring only at the end. In those apocalypses in which the historical return is mentioned, it or aspects of it may be mentioned in a negative light..But in most texts , while a return from exile is acknowledged, the teaching is that exile is an ongoing condition, one that may never end in historical time. The burden of the authors consequently is to provide the necessary information and consolation so that the readers of their messages are enabled to cope with the discouraging course of history and to renew their confidence in the God who governs and directs all his history.

(1997:109)

3.5. *Exile, Restoration and the Testamentary Literature*

Before turning our attention to the Dead Sea Scrolls, it is important to take brief note of the perspectives regarding exile and restoration which are found within the Jewish Testaments and in particular the *Testament of Levi* and the *Testament of Moses*. The reason for turning our attention to the Testaments at all is because, in the words of Collins (1984a:325), the predictions contained within the Testaments 'often display the so-called 'Sin-Exile-Return' pattern which is typical of the Deuteronomic history.' The reason we are focussing our attention upon *Testament*

⁷⁰ VanderKam does point out that *Sibylline Oracles* 3 seems to ascribe greater significance to the historic return than that found in the other writings.

of *Levi* and *Testament of Moses* is because they represent the two distinct perspectives of exile which we noted in our discussion of Apocalyptic, viz exile as historical event of limited duration (*Testament of Moses* 3-4) and exile as continuing state (*Testament of Levi* 16-17).

Testament of Moses

According to Collins (1984a:325-26): ‘....the *Testament (Assumption) of Moses* consists almost entirely of prediction’ of which ‘much is an *ex eventu* account of the history of Israel. There is very little direct exhortation and no historical retrospective.’ The testament pictures Moses telling Joshua what ‘the Lord of the world has decreed’ (1:12-13). This Lord of the world has created ‘the world on behalf of his people, but did not make this purpose of creation known from the beginning of the world so that the nations of the world might be found guilty’(1:12-13). Joshua will lead the people into the land that God promised to the fathers, where he will local magistrates in accordance with the will of the Lord. After this comes the time of the monarchy, during which the Temple is built and the nation divides, the ten tribes having their own kingdom with its ordinances. The time of the ‘two holy tribes’ (2:5) will be a mixture of covenant loyalty and disobedience culminating in the exile of ‘the two tribes’ at the hands of a king from the east. In the exile the two tribes will call out to the ten, affirming the righteousness of God’s judgements (3:4-6). This will result in both groups crying out to the Lord and affirming that their exile (called slavery in 3:14) is because they transgressed the laws given through Moses. The slavery will last seventy-seven years (3:14). According to VanderKam (1997:93), this specification of the duration of the exile is seventy-seven years is ‘highly unusual in statements about the length of the captivity from the land’. What is of importance though is that the exile is of a definite (divinely ordered = ‘seventy seven’?) duration. In 4:1-6 the edict for the return is noted in response to the prayers of ‘one who is over them’ (Daniel?). What follows is somewhat ambiguous because some of the tribes will return and strongly build the walls (4:7-8), but the two tribes who will remain steadfast in their ‘former faith’, ‘will not be able to offer sacrifices to the Lord of their fathers’ (4:8-9). Is this indicative of some doubt on the part of the author concerning the orthodoxy associated with the second temple? In addition to this, the ten tribes who maintain their national integrity remain in the dispersion. That the historical return does not finally resolve the question of Israel’s future can also be seen in the ensuing chapters which describe national apostasy in the midst of an ongoing oppression, culminating in a dreadful persecution - described

by the faithful Taxo, from the tribe of Levi, as ‘cruel, impure, going beyond all the bounds of mercy - even exceeding the former one’ (9:2-3). A historical return their might have been, but it has hardly ushered in the time of godliness and peace that the prophets had promised. Taxo and his sons, resolve to die before transgressing the law, and it is this determination to stay true to the Lord, that ushers in the time of the kingdom of God and the exaltation of his people which is described in cosmic, rather than earthly Jerusalem terms. Thus, although *Testament of Moses* 3-4 does speak of a historic return at the end of seventy-seven years, the ensuing narrative implies that the ultimate restoration will not be until the time of the kingdom of God.

Testament of Levi

Testament Levi 1:1 describes the Testament as ‘a copy of the words of Levi: the things that he decreed to his sons concerning all that they were to do and the things that would happen to them until the day of judgement’. Thus it concerns the priesthood from the time of Levi, who receives the priesthood from the Holy Most High (5:1-3) to be kept by Levi and his sons until the Lord comes to dwell in the midst of Israel. How this dwelling will be accomplished is not made known but it is associated with the priesthood of one who the Lord will raise up.

The material is difficult because of the presence of Christian redaction, but at its core it appears to be a Jewish work with an approach to the subject of the exile which is consistent with that which we have found in other Jewish writings of the Second Temple period. The material which deals directly with the exile occurs in chapters 16-17. According to 16:1, Levi’s sons will ‘wander astray and profane the priesthood and defile the sacrificial altars’ for ‘seventy weeks’. Read against the backdrop of works like Daniel, Jubilees and Enoch, this seems to be a reference to an open-ended period of transgression. This open-ended period of transgression is matched by the viewpoint which is taken of the exile and return. These will occur in the fourth and fifth jubilees respectively (17:5, 10). During the fifth week the house of the Lord will be renewed, but the fifth, sixth and seventh weeks will be overcome with darkness (17:8). The seventh week - supposedly post-return - is described as a time of captivity and oppression in which land and possessions will be stolen. This period - the most wicked yet described- will give way to the final judgement and the raising up of the Lord’s chosen priest. Concerning the view of the exile portrayed in the *Testament of Levi*, VanderKam (1997:101) observes that ‘the seven jubilees do

not just cover the period from the exile to the end but appear to extend from Levi's or Aaron's time to the eschaton. The exile is a punishment for priestly malfeasance, yet it is followed by a return. The return itself is not judged negatively, but it is obvious that it did not transform the priesthood because even more evil priests arose after this.' Given the link between the lack of sanctity of the priests and the captivity of the nation, this can only imply that the exile, at least in moral and spiritual terms continues.

3.6. *Exile, Restoration and Qumran Sectarian Literature*

One of the primary difficulties facing anyone who seeks to investigate a particular theological theme such as exile and restoration within the Qumran Sectarian Literature arises curiously enough from the sheer volume and variety of the texts which have been discovered and published thus far, not to mention of course the many that are yet to be published. At its heart, the problem centres around two closely related questions. First, of all the texts found and published, which are in fact a true expression of the theological convictions of the sect, such as they were? Second, what criterion should be applied in coming to such a decision? One possible answer could be formulated, in relation to Biblical texts at least, simply on the basis of frequency of occurrence.⁷¹ The more frequent a text, the more important to the community and thus the more likely to be reflective of its primary concerns. And at one level such an approach, though requiring some caution,⁷² is not without its merit and yields some interesting results. Thus VanderKam (2001:151-52), while cautioning that the term 'biblical' is somewhat anachronistic for the period, states that the 'statistics about biblical manuscripts are worth noting.' He points out that 'the book most frequently attested is Psalms (thirty-six copies), followed by Deuteronomy (twenty-nine) and Isaiah (twenty-one).' Only three other books are present in more than ten copies *viz* Exodus (seventeen), Genesis (fifteen) and Leviticus (thirteen) while a number of others, particularly the historical and wisdom books, have very poor representation. A comparison with the chart provided by Pate (2000:38), while providing slight variations, confirms and expands the overall

⁷¹ Another guideline as far as the collection in general is concerned is the topical categorization of texts by collectors and translators - *cf* the comments of Deasley (2000:68).

⁷² The fact that over two hundred OT manuscripts have been found in the eleven caves and that the representation is as general as it is (only Esther is excluded) suggests that the statistics are fairly representative of the true picture, even allowing for the loss of some MSS or delay in translation and identification.

picture, suggesting that the Torah, Isaiah, the Psalms and Daniel were of particular importance to the community. We will return to the possible reasons for this again below.

A second answer to the question of selection and representation is provided by Devorah Dimant (1995:23-58) whose work is quoted extensively and with approbation in Deasley (2000:68-72). According to Deasley (2000:68) the significance of Dimant's work is that 'it is a self conscious attempt to isolate from the entire corpus of texts those where the distinctive thought-prints of the community may be found.' This she endeavours to achieve using the criterion of a conjunction of a distinctive terminology linked with an individual set of ideas (*cf* Deasley 2000:69). In Dimant's own words: 'In themselves, concepts and ideas are insufficient criteria for assigning a given text to the group of the CT works.⁷³ Only the combination of the distinctive terminology with the respective ideas provides such a criteria.' On the basis of this Dimant identifies four main areas in which ideas and terminology cohere. These are conveniently summarised by Deasley (2000:69-70) as (1) the practices and organization of a distinct community, (2) the history of the community and its present circumstances, (3) the theological and metaphysical outlook of the community and (4) the distinctive method of biblical interpretation employed by the community. Deasley (2000:71-72) does issue some helpful cautions with regard to the application of Dimant's general approach, but he is content to employ the criteria to identify a core group⁷⁴ of texts which can be viewed as a preliminary window into the theological thought of the sect. It is to a selection of texts from this core-group that we turn for an investigation of conceptions about exile and restoration among the community at Qumran.

The Rule of the Community (1QS)⁷⁵

According to Dimant (1984:498) the '*Rule* consists of distinct literary units of different

⁷³ 'CT works' are those in which the terminology and ideas are taken to be that of the Qumran community.

⁷⁴ *The Rule of the Community* (1QS); the *Hodayot* (1QH); the *Damascus Document* (CD); the *War Scroll* (1QM) and selected *Pesharim*; (see Deasley 2000:72; *cf* Dimant 1984:487-88).

⁷⁵ *The Rule* and the *Damascus Document* are clearly composite texts which evidence revision over a period of time. A comparison of the various copies found does show some variation, indicative of changes within the group (s) which preserved them. As far as our area of study is concerned, the variations have no significant effect. Thus we will limit ourselves to the consideration of text 'A' in each case.

character.’ These are (1) a general introduction stating the aims of the community (1:1-15), (2) a description of the entrance into the ‘covenant’ (1:16-3:12), (3) a summary of the sects main theological ideas (3:13-4:26), (4) a combination of several sets of rules (5:1-6:23), (5) a penal code (6:24-7:25), (6) a description of the ideal community (8:1-9:11), (7) concluding instructions to the community (9:12-26) and (8) a concluding psalm-like hymn or confession (10:1-11:22). The work has strong covenantal overtones, not only in structure but in content. There are clear echos of Deuteronomy, a fact which is hardly surprising in the light of the prevalence of that book among the manuscript remains, although the content of the ‘covenant of kindness’ as it is referred to in 1QS I:7 does have its own distinctive features. The community is referred to both as ‘the community of God’ (I:12) and ‘the community of the covenant’ (V:5). This is because ‘all those who enter in the Rule of the Community ..establish a covenant before God’ (I:16). In addition we note that a key component within the covenant is that of repentance (I:24-26) and a commitment to revert to the Law of Moses with a whole heart (V:8-9), albeit the Law now interpreted according to the revelation given to the Zadokite priests of the Community (V:9). Indeed, the very first reference to the purpose of the Rule speaks of a commitment not only to seek God but also ‘to do what is good and just in his presence, as commanded by means of the hand of Moses and his servants the Prophets’ (I:3). From the above, it is clear that there is definite continuity between the covenant entered into at Qumran and the covenant at Sinai.

But, as Deasley (2000:140-50) has pointed out, there are clear indications within the *Rule* (as well as other writings) that the covenant should be viewed in New Covenant terms, even though the phrase ‘new covenant’ is not used in *the Rule of the Community*. Thus those who enter the community do so voluntarily and are said to ‘enter’ the covenant (I:16, 24; II:18). And although the notion of a ‘community of the faithful’ is fundamental to the Community at Qumran (a fact underlined by the participation of the entire community in the annual covenant renewal ceremony (II:18-25)) each member enters the covenant individually, so that there is a clear emphasis on personal commitment as well as community membership. This is further underlined by the emphasis on personal heartfelt obedience and on individual progress within the Community (V:1-24). Furthermore, we note that the Community is called ‘those selected by God for an everlasting covenant’ (IV:22) and that it consists of those over whom God has sprinkled ‘the spirit of truth like lustral water (in order to cleanse him) from all the abhorrences of deceit and from the defilement of the unclean spirit’ (IV:21). This appears to be an allusion to the idea, if not the full

gamut of terminology, of the new covenant found in Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36. Thus the image of the Community which emerges from the *Rule* is that of a 'holy nation', the True Israel, over and against those who do not walk in the ways of truth. This notion of a divinely ordered separation within national Israel is of course also consistent with the prophetic idea of the remnant so that one can describe the Community of the remnant of Israel around which the new covenant community is being constituted by personal repentance and commitment, but ultimately on the basis of divine election.⁷⁶ In terms of our field of investigation, this of course suggests that the Community viewed itself as that remnant which, though in exile (during all the days of the dominion Belial - II:18) and awaiting the end of the ages and the coming kingdom of God, had become the centre around which God's new people - indeed his new humanity were to be built (*cf* IV:16-26). In this connection it is striking to note the language in which the formation of the Community is couched, for the going out into the desert to give themselves wholly to the study and implementation of the law is described, in 'end of exile' terms as the opening 'there' of 'His path', 'as it is written: 'In the desert prepare the way of ****, straighten in the steppe a roadway for our God' (VIII:12-14).

*The Damascus Document (CD-A)*⁷⁷

The extant text of CD-A, the *Damascus Document* or *Damascus Covenant* as it is designated by Dimant (1984:490) has 'two distinct parts, each of a different character' (Dimant 1984:491). The first part, Columns 1-8, contain 'admonitions, moral addresses and historical teachings.' The second part, Columns 9-16, 'contain halakhic legal prescriptions and sectarian regulations, partly constituting a rule proper' (Dimant 1984:491; *cf* Deasley 2000:87). Dimant notes that although they are of a 'distinct nature', 'the two parts are closely related in ideas and style', a fact which can be seen clearly from the opening admonition (I:1-II:1), which not only describes the origin of the sect, but also the advent of the 'Teacher of Righteousness' whose task it was to lead the community in the 'way of God's heart.' It is to this opening admonition that we direct our

⁷⁶ This notion of divine sovereignty and election is introduced into the *Rule* in III:14 - IV:26 as the key to understanding the nature and purpose of the Community.

⁷⁷ We will focus our attention on the major of the two manuscripts discovered in the *Genizah* of the Ezra synagogue in Cairo by Solomon Schechter in 1896. For a discussion of the relationship between CD-A and CD-B see Dimant (1984:494-496).

attention as we start because it makes a very striking claim regarding the question of the exile and the origin of the sect.

The Admonition which begins with a declaration of God's 'dispute with all flesh' and his impending judgements, very quickly turns its attention to the fact of the exile of Judah. This is described in I:3-5a in the statement that 'God hid his face from Israel and from his sanctuary and delivered them up to the sword'. But then claims the writing, 'God remembered the covenant of the very first, he saved a remnant for Israel, and did not deliver them up to destruction.' Although this 'remnant' is generally taken as a description of the Qumran Community (Deasley 2000:189), it is in my opinion better to see in the term a reference to the returnees from Babylon, from whom, 'at the moment of wrath' (I:5b). God then caused a 'shoot of the planting' to sprout 'from Israel and Aaron' in order to possess the land' (I:6-7). This clearly is a description of the community who in repentance grope toward the good path and who separated themselves from the evil doers in the land of Judah and went to dwell in the land of Damascus (*cf* VI:5). What is striking, and this remains valid on either reading of the term 'remnant', is that the sprouting of the root from Israel, language which in the Old Testament prophets like Isaiah, clearly of importance to the Community (see above), bespoke a time of restoration. This time of restoration or new beginning is said to have occurred, 'three hundred and ninety years after having delivered them up into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar' (I:6). This 'sprouting of the shoot' is said to have happened at the time of God's 'visit' another eschatologically loaded term, so that 'entire event should be read in eschatological perspective' (Dimant 1984:491-92). Deasley (2000:88-89) suggests that the 390 years together with the period in XX:14-15 (CD-B) makes up Daniel's 490 years (seventy weeks of seven), but this is in my opinion unlikely. Abegg (1997:120) is probably correct when he suggests that Ezekiel 4:5 lies behind the symbolic chronology just as the book of Jubilees does elsewhere in the Scrolls.

Either way though, it is clear from the admonition that the 'time of God's wrath' is still very much in operation, many years after the return and the rebuilding of the temple. What is more, it is clear from the *Damascus Covenant* that the Qumran Community see themselves as the *true returnees*, that is, the ones who have truly returned to the God (IV:2), whose sins have thus been forgiven (III:18) and for whom the God has built 'a house, such as there has not been since

ancient times, even until now' (III:19).⁷⁸ It is with these 'converts of Israel, who left the land of Judah and lived in the land of Damascus' that God has made a 'new covenant' (VI:19). It would however be mistaken to suggest that the Community saw their own existence as the fulness of the restoration, for they are clearly only the first-fruits, still subject to weakness and sin and thus in need of atonement and instruction. They live in the time of the loosing of Belial (4:13a), a time of testing, danger and judgement for all who do not hold fast to the Rule. But this means that they also stand on the very brink of the new age, the time of the fulfilment of God's ancient promises (III:2, 13-17) and his purposes for the world (III:20).

The War Scroll (1QM)

The *War Scroll* is a description of the final eschatological war between the forces of Light, commanded by the archangel Michael and the forces of Darkness, headed by Belial. In the forces of Light we find the members of the sectarian community, who although completely dependent on God for the victory, must undertake the battle rather like the Israelites of old in the conquest of the promised land. There are in fact a number of points within the text that highlight the equation between this final war and the holy war of the conquest. In the first place, there is the involvement of a host of good angels, notably Michael who appears as the captain of the LORD's hosts (V:1-2; XVII:6-7 *cf* Joshua 5:13-15). Secondly, there is the demand for the holiness of the soldiers of Light and their camp in a way reminiscent of the preparations for the battle of Jericho. Thirdly, there are the detailed descriptions (the Rule) of the War which specifies a role for each of the community, and lays down details for the naming and blowing of trumpets. The details are far more intricate, in keeping with the general sectarian tendency to view esoteric details about Law and calendar as deeper mysteries which have been revealed in the last days, but the fundamental concepts are the same (*cf* II:1-X:8 with Numbers 1:1-10:36 and Joshua 3:1-6:27). Fourthly, there is the involvement of God himself who appears as the Divine Warrior of Exodus 15, majestic in battle, working wonders (X:8-XI:17; see especially XI:9-10) and who in the end determines the outcome of the final battle. The forces of Darkness on the other hand, under the leadership of Belial, are primarily the Kittim, the foreigners of whom a number are Israel's

⁷⁸ *Cf* Abegg (1997:114): 'I suggest that the translation 'Israelite returnees' best satisfies the contexts of all the passages in which it occurs and the emphasis on exilic imagery in the Qumran corpus.'

traditional opponents. But they are assisted by a group designated as ‘the wicked of the covenant’ (I:2). Dimant (1984:515) designates these as ‘apostate Jews’, but it is not immediately clear whether they are members of the nation who have failed / refused to join the Community in the desert or whether they are particularly those who have abandoned the Community for whatever reason. Given the all embracing nature of the conflict, it is best to take the phrase as an inclusive one, which while targeting those who have abandoned the covenant community in particular, must necessarily also include those who never joined. The identification of the Community as the True Israel makes this inevitable.

Two further points must be noted with respect to the question of exile and restoration in particular. The first is the rather striking description of the Community in I:2-3. They are twice called ‘the exiled of the desert’. This description underlines the point made by Abegg (1997:120 note 38) that even though the much debated and somewhat ambiguous phrase שְׂבִי יִשְׂרָאֵל (returnees / captivity / repentant of Israel) should generally be interpreted as ‘repentant’, the ‘sect still considered itself to be in exile as well.’ Indeed given the positive view taken especially in Ezekiel with regard to the exiles as opposed to those who remained in Jerusalem before the fall of the city, it is little wonder that the sect went into voluntary exile in the desert so as to become just such a remnant from whom God in his own time could build a new nation. Thus within Qumran thinking such as it was, one could speak of *two* returns. A first return in repentance by which the individual returned to the God and became a member of the community to live under the Rule. And then a second return, at the end of the ages, which involved a literal return to the holy land and the holy city - itself now desolate (*cf* I:3 - the ‘desert of Jerusalem’) - but with the ultimate view of its purification and re-consecration. This leads to the second point of interest and that is the striking description of Jerusalem in the XII:12-18 which echos very strongly the Zion theology of prophecies like Isaiah. Thus although the *Rule of the Community* and the *Damascus Covenant* are, given the situation in the desert and in Jerusalem respectively, somewhat ambivalent about Jerusalem, the *War Scroll* does perceive an eschatological future for the city although it is consistent with the other writings in seeing the Community as a substitute for the

temple until such time as the victory of the sons of Light is complete and Jerusalem is restored.⁷⁹

The Pesharim

The *Pesharim*, viz those documents which can be grouped together under the rubric of *peshet* exegesis, should be seen as wider in scope than the so-called *continuous pesharim* such as the commentaries on the prophets (3QIsaiah Peshet; 4QHosea Peshet; 1QHabbukuk Peshet; 4Q Psalms Peshet etc). It is now increasingly recognized among scholars that there are in fact three categories of Peshet viz (1) Continuous Peshet, (2) Thematic Peshet (e.g., 4Q *Florilegium*; 11Q *Melchisedech*) and (3) Isolated *Pesharim* such as that found in CD VII:14-19 or 1QS VIII:13-15. Furthermore, as Dimant (1984:504-08) points out in her excellent summary of 'Peshet', its form and its distinctive characteristics, the method involved in *peshet* interpretation has much in common with other Jewish literary and interpretive forms such as some forms of *midrash* as well as Jewish dream-interpretation of the kind found in Daniel. What seems to be distinctive about Qumran peshet, is the combination of the method of interpretation (text + the term *peshet* + interpretation) with a particularly *historical - eschatological* content. This ties in with the idea within the community that what had been spoken in mysterious form through the prophets in ages past, had now been made known, through divine revelation, to the community who stood at the brink of the new age. This combination of features which distinguishes Sectarian peshet from other similar forms of interpretation⁸⁰ is well illustrated in the famous and oft-quoted 1QpHab VII:3-5: 'And as for what he says: 'So that the one who reads it may run'. Its interpretation concerns the Teacher of Righteousness, to whom God has disclosed all the mysteries of his servants the prophets. 'For the vision has an appointed time, it will have an end and not fail'. Its interpretation: the final age will be extended and will go beyond all that the prophets say, because the mysteries of God are wonderful'. The particular *historical-*

⁷⁹ Note e.g., CD XI:11-12; VIII:8-10. The detailed descriptions found within the *Temple Scroll* (11Q19) are probably to be taken, alongside of the collection of *New Jerusalem* texts (2Q4 etc) as references to the eschatological city and temple. There is some question about whether the *Temple Scroll* originated within the community at Qumran or not (see Deasley 2000:69-72; cf Dimant 1984:486 note 25, 488 note 33).

⁸⁰ It is the failure to fully appreciate the comprehensive nature of *peshet* interpretation (text + peshet + distinctive *historical-eschatological* content to the interpretation) which has led to the term being used, mistakenly in my opinion, of Matthew's fulfilment formulae by e.g., Stendahl (1968) and more recently by Pate (2000). See Dimant (1984:507).

eschatological feature of the Sectarian *pesharim* arose of course from the fact that they saw themselves as the righteous remnant living in the last days upon whom the words of the prophets had unique and ultimate bearing. It is this interpretation of what we have elsewhere called prophetic eschatology, that makes the *pesharim* of particular interest for our investigation of exile and restoration.

Despite the very fragmentary nature of the prophetic *pesharim* there are a number of key facts which emerge as representative of an overall perspective. *First*, there is the identification of the armies of Israel's enemies, particularly the Babylonians and Assyrians with the Kittim, that is, the gentile opponents of Israel, later in particular the Romans. *Second*, rebellious Israel within the prophetic texts is identified first with the inhabitants of Jerusalem under the sway of their worldly and unholy leaders (the Wicked Priest?) and second with those who are disloyal to the Teacher of Righteousness and who have sided with his primary opponent (the Man of Lies). *Third*, the righteous remnant are always and only the members of the Community who stand on the side of the Teacher of Righteousness. *Fourth*, the language which speaks of return in the prophetic texts is interpreted somewhat ambiguously, sometimes with reference to the establishment of the community and the instruction in the law by the Teacher, sometimes in relation to judgement upon the heretics in Jerusalem, sometimes of the final battle when victory will pass to the Community, the true Israel and they will inherit the land. The overall impression that one gains from the *pesharim* on the prophetic books is therefore of a basic coherence of perspective between these texts and those considered earlier. The remnant, though they have 'returned' to the LORD and his law, are still 'in exile' and suffer testing and persecution at the hands of their opponents - particularly those in Jerusalem. But the time will come - indeed is approaching soon - when the 'forty years' of their trial and desert experience will end and in a mighty battle and ultimate victory final restoration will be theirs, along with the blessing and rest that comes from God.⁸¹

An eschatological viewpoint in which the community is depicted as the 'righteous sufferers' - 'the community of the poor' who suffer at the hands of the wicked (the affluent Man of Lies and his

⁸¹ I have refrained from interspersing these points with quotations. In support, see *inter alia* 3QpIs 1-7; 4QpIs^a I:20-25; II:1-15; 4QpIs^b II:1-10; 4QpIs^c II:1-18 *Frag* 23:1-29; 4QpHos^b *Frag* 2:1-7; 1QpMic *Frag* 10:3-11; 4QpNah *Frag* 3+4 I:1-8; II:1-10; III:1-11; 1QpHab.

followers and those in the house of Judah) but who will ultimately be rescued by the LORD is presented in the pesher on Psalm 37 (4QpPs^a). This ‘congregation of the poor’ are said to ‘inherit the land’ (language based upon the Exodus and conquest) but applied within the pesher to refer to those who ‘tolerate the period of distress and will be rescued from the snares of Belial’ (II:4-10). Thus possession of the land is seen as an eschatological blessing which will be the reward of the ‘congregation of the poor’ who will ‘see the judgement of evil and with his chosen one (the Teacher of Righteousness) will rejoice in the true inheritance’ (IV:11-12). The description of community as ‘the congregation of the poor’ is striking and echoes the language of Isaiah 55:1-3 and 61:1-7, in which the poor were the exiles. The community are in just such a position during the time of the distress, but they will ultimately possess the land and all the fruits of the land, when God finally vindicates their cause and destroys their opponents, viz the Jews who compromise and grow affluent because of their relationship with foreign nations. A similar eschatological view of the possession of land and the redemption of the ‘poor’ is set out in 11Q Melchizedek in connection with the year of Jubilee. According to the pesher, these jubilee laws of Leviticus and Deuteronomy have their ultimate reference in the good news of liberty for the captives as proclaimed in Isaiah 61. These captives are the ‘exiles’, the ‘congregation of the all the sons of justice, those who establish the covenant, those who avoid walking on the path of the people’ (II:24), but who must be freed from ‘the debt of all their iniquities’ (II:6). This liberation of the captives is called a ‘return’ (II:6), again in the dual sense of repentance on the one hand and return from exile on the other.⁸² It will be brought about by Melchizedek, in whose ‘lot’ and ‘year of grace’, judgement will be given on behalf of ‘the afflicted ones of Zion’, their sins atoned for, and their enemies defeated forever. Thus will the afflicted ones be comforted within the kingdom of God, and Israel’s exile finally brought to an end.

4. Conclusion

In the above discussion we have focussed our attention on one area of importance for the formulation of early Jewish conceptions of exile and restoration, namely the literature of the Second Temple period. Given the limitations of the current project, the investigation has not been

⁸² The pattern of sin - repentance - grace which is seen in these and other texts as applied to the community find personal and individual expression in the *Hodayoth* or Hymns (1QH^a, 1QH^b, 4QH^a).

exhaustive, but it has, in my opinion, focussed on a representative selection of texts. On the basis of the literature surveyed, and in keeping with our earlier conclusions regarding the perspective of the Hebrew scriptures which were of such significance to Jews of the period, we can, I believe, agree with the conclusion reached by Wright (1992:268) that, despite slight variations regarding the significance of the 6th century BC return under Zerubbabel and Joshua, the role of Jerusalem and its rebuilt temple, and the exact nature and timing of a longed for final restoration, ‘most Jews of this period, it seems, would have answered the question ‘where are we?’ in language which, reduced to its simplest form, meant: we are still in exile.’⁸³ Similar investigations involving the same and other texts, including works such as the *Targums* and *Rabbinic literature* as well as non-literary evidence such as synagogue art and grave inscriptions (see Scott 1997:193-200) have come to fundamentally the same conclusion,⁸⁴ although such conclusions have not gone unchallenged (*cf* Casey 1998:95-103). In my opinion however, Wright’s point stands. Thus I agree with the conclusion of Evans in defence of Wright over and against the criticism of Casey: ‘Although one encounters differences in detail, a fairly consistent pattern emerges. Many Jews during the Second Temple period believed that the exile perdured’ (1999:90). And of course, as we have seen in the writings of the Qumran sectarians and as is evident from the accounts of Josephus with regard to such characters as Theudas and the ‘Egyptian Jew’ (*Antiquities of the Jews* 20.5.1#97-98; 20.8.6 #167-72 *cf* Evans 1999:78-82), in such a context of ‘ongoing exile’, there was no shortage of answers proffered as to why such a state of exile should still exist and how it could be brought to an end.⁸⁵ It was into this context then that first John the Baptist and then Jesus of Nazareth came preaching the nearness of the kingdom of God. And it was into this same context that Matthew sent his book, a book which as we shall see in the concluding chapter, he thus quite appropriately designated as *this gospel* (Matthew 26:13).

⁸³ Wright’s conclusion is of course based on a much more detailed investigation of the literature under the rubrics of *story*, *symbols*, *praxis* and *beliefs* which in his opinion are together constitutive of what he has termed a ‘mainline worldview’ (1992:338).

⁸⁴ See e.g. Scott (1997b:171-218); Chilton (1997:239-247); Porton (1997:249-295); Evans (1999:77-100); Patte (2000).

⁸⁵ Feldman (1997:145-172) demonstrates, in my opinion fairly conclusively, that Josephus had a largely positive view with regard to the Diaspora and that he thus avoids speaking in the strict sense about the Diaspora as an exile, nor does he stress any hope of return. Given the time of Josephus writing and his relationship with the Roman authorities this is hardly a surprising fact.

Chapter 7. Summary and Conclusion

1. Summary of Results

In the preceding chapters I have attempted to investigate two key aspects of the theme of *restoration from exile* and its importance for an interpretation of the gospel of Matthew.

(1) First, I have sought to demonstrate that restoration from exile is indeed a *valid* and *valuable* ‘hermeneutical prism’ through which Matthew’s gospel can be interpreted. This I have attempted to do by considering four aspects of Matthew’s gospel:

First, we turned our attention to Matthew 1:1-17 which, as we saw, has a vital role both in relation to the legitimating function of the gospel within the Matthean communities and in orientating the reader of Matthew’s gospel and thus providing a key salvation-historical framework within which Matthew’s story of Jesus is to be understood. I have affirmed that this salvation-historical framework anchors the primary biographical concern of Matthew, *viz* the story of Jesus, to the story of Israel and indeed to the story of God’s work to bless ‘all the families of the earth’ in accordance with his promise to Abraham. I have also affirmed, albeit in passing, that it is as the Messiah, the son of David, that Jesus, the son of Abraham, brings this story of God’s work to its fulfilment. This much is clearly implied by Matthew in the first words of the Gospel when he introduces Jesus as the Christ, the Son of David, the son of Abraham. And it is reaffirmed throughout Matthew’s gospel in a variety of ways, some of which we have discussed and will note below, each of which has been the focus of scholarly interest and discussion over the many years that Matthew’s gospel has exercised its considerable influence over the church. But we also noted the *exile* as a key building block within Matthew’s understanding of salvation-history as evidenced by the fourfold reference to exile in Matthew’s genealogy of Jesus, particularly the very striking description of the third of Matthew’s triad of salvation-historical epochs - ἀπὸ τῆς μετοικεσίας Βαβυλῶνος ἕως τοῦ Χριστοῦ. This suggests, we noted, that it is precisely as the one who brings Israel’s exile to an end that Jesus’ fulfils his Messianic task.

Second, we noted in our more comprehensive evaluation of salvation history within Matthew’s

gospel, that the notion of Jesus as Israel's Messiah and the one who brings the exile to an end and ushers in the time of restoration, needs to be modulated in the light of Jesus' rejection by Israel and by his consequent *now / not yet* presentation of the coming of the kingdom as these are depicted within Matthew's gospel. Thus we saw that the end of exile and of 'restlessness' is offered by Jesus to all who will come to him and take his 'yoke' upon them, a reference in Matthew to the disciples who are the 'little ones' to whom the secrets of the kingdom are revealed and who join in his mission. This mission is to the 'lost sheep of Israel' in the first place, but is extended to all nations in the light of Jesus' exaltation as eschatological king over the universe. Thus the early Jewish disciples of Jesus fulfil the role of the 'restored remnant' through whom blessing of the rule of Jesus is extended to all the families of the earth, a reality which will only be experienced in fulness at the time of Jesus' return in glory at the end of the ages.

Third, we noted with regard to the Plot of Matthew's gospel, that the gospel of Matthew can thus be described, to use the terminology of narrative criticism, as a story which is focussed on the person of Jesus and the significance of his words and deeds, especially his death, though the resurrection of Jesus is clearly of great importance as well, not least as the reality around which Jesus' new authority is defined and the disciples' mission is shaped. Furthermore this story about Jesus is described in particular in terms of Jesus' purpose, by his death and resurrection, to save his people from their sins and *in this way* to bring their exile, their 'restlessness of soul' to an end. Thus *restoration from exile* embraces far more than 'inheriting the land'. It involves 'rest of soul for the weary,' 'comfort for the mourners,' 'fulness for the ones hungering and thirsting for righteousness,' the kingdom of heaven for the 'poor in spirit' and the true knowledge of God for all who come to Jesus. Nor is this promise of 'rest for the restless' a promise to Israel alone. It stands as a promise for 'exiled humankind' of whom Israel's own story of exile and restoration, of sin and salvation from sin, stands as a paradigm and a promise in and through Jesus. It is to *all* the weary and heavy laden that Jesus' invitation and promise of rest is extended.

Fourth, we noted that this understanding of Jesus as the one who brings the exile to an end both informs and clarifies Matthew's presentation of Jesus as the one who 'fulfills the Law and the Prophets,' viz the Old Testament scriptures. This 'theology of fulfilment' we have seen to be true not only with regard to the characteristic 'formula quotations' but with regard to Matthew's

overall use of the Old Testament. Furthermore we have seen that, for all the diversity of ways in which Jesus can be said to fulfil the scriptures, the element of restoration from exile is a key factor both in terms of Matthew's choice of Old Testament texts and the way in which these texts are applied to the person and work of Jesus. Thus this understanding of *fulfilment* in Matthew facilitates the interpreter's understanding of Matthew's use of the Old Testament. But it does far more, for it gives both content and coherence to the idea of fulfilment within Matthew's gospel and points to the fact that, for Matthew, fulfilment, for all its rich texture, ultimately refers to the bringing to fruition of God's plan and purpose through the agency of Jesus save his people from their sins and to establish his kingdom among all the nations.

#1: In the light of the above I therefore conclude that Matthew's gospel reflects a real, but not an exclusive, interest in the question of restoration from exile. Thus, in my opinion, the theme of *restoration from exile* is a *valid* and *valuable* hermeneutical prism for the interpretation of Matthew's gospel. It is however not to be seen as the only such interpretive prism but should be used in conjunction with others in the pursuit of as comprehensive interpretation of Matthew's gospel as is possible.

(2) Second, I have sought to evaluate the *validity* of the claim that for all their diversity, Jews of the Second Temple period saw themselves by and large as still in exile. This I have attempted to do by means of a survey of the themes of exile and restoration across the grand narrative of the Hebrew Bible (*Tanakh* - Genesis to Chronicles) and a survey of selected, though representative texts from the Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha and the Dead Sea Scrolls. In attempting such a survey, I have gone with fear and trembling, into what, for me, has been new and largely unfamiliar territory. But, given the claims and rebuttals regarding the Jews of the Second Temple period and their view of the exile, such a survey has seemed to be of fundamental importance for the thesis.

On the basis of this survey and in conjunction with the conclusions reached by other scholars based on their own evaluation both of these and similar texts and also of other non-literary factors, we thus concluded that such an 'exilic self understanding' did indeed exist both among Palestinian and Diasporic Jews and that it gave rise to real, albeit different attempts to resolve the

problem of the ongoing exile, attempts as wide-ranging as that of Josephus on the one hand and the Qumran sect on the other. Furthermore one might point out that what was true during the period of Herod's temple, however ambivalent or otherwise various groups may have been toward it, would have been magnified significantly in the period following the destruction of the temple in AD 70.

#2. Consequently I conclude that Matthew's gospel, with its clear, though not exclusive interest in restoration from exile can be said to 'fit' the theological *milieu* of the Second Temple period and the time immediately following the destruction of Herod's temple. Wright (1996) has sought to apply this fact to the question of the Historical Jesus. My conclusion is less ambitious and focusses solely on Matthew's presentation of Jesus and its applicability to its context. But I do concur with Wright that Matthew is thus presenting Jesus as *the solution* to a problem which was widely acknowledged as in need of solving, namely the problem of the exile and the coming of the kingdom of God.

2. Conclusion

The wise preacher once spoke of the endless writing of books and the burden of much study (Ecclesiastes 12:12). Certainly, anyone wandering into the field of Matthean studies at the turn of the Twenty-first century, must feel the force of those sentiments very keenly indeed. And yet despite the vast body of Matthean literature, Matthew's gospel continues to hold out an invitation and to offer a rich welcome to those who seek to enquirer within. Our investigation into the themes of exile and restoration in Matthew's gospel has really only touched on a few selected areas of the gospel and has inevitably left many relevant and important matters untouched or inadequately resolved. Given the growing interest that there seems to be in the whole question of exile and restoration and its importance for the study of the New Testament, I have little doubt that we will hear far more on the subject with regard to various aspects of Matthew's gospel.¹

One area that can be singled out for possible investigation is the question of the *Genre* and

¹ It would be of interest to see whether a similar interest in exile and restoration can be detected in the Fourth Gospel. If so, it would provide possibilities for an investigation of similarity of what might be termed 'theological structure' between the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel.

Setting of Matthew's gospel and the consequent discussion of Matthew's purpose. These related questions have only been touched on in passing in our discussions, yet they are of fundamental importance for any thoroughgoing study of Matthew's gospel.

In our discussion of the genealogy, I mentioned briefly my agreement with Stanton's mediating view that the setting of the Matthean communities was that of an *extra muros* dialogue with the Jewish community alongside of which they existed and with regard to which they would inevitably have faced the twin tasks of legitimization and evangelism.² Matthew's interest in exile and restoration does not of itself resolve the question of the setting of the gospel. Nor does it materially influence one's conclusions about the place of origin of the gospel as it would be appropriate both to a Palestinian or a Diaspora setting, although one might be tempted to argue that such a claim regarding the end of the exile was more consistent with a Palestinian setting, as was the case at Qumran. But over and against this it is important to stress that Matthew is presenting Jesus and his life, death and resurrection and not the formation of the Matthean communities as the locus of restoration. The communities were the consequence of the restoration not its cause. Furthermore, Matthew's interest in exile and restoration does not decide the issue of whether the so-called 'communities of Matthew' had in fact broken with the synagogue or not. That must be decided on different grounds (*cf* Stanton, 1992b:379-91). In my opinion however, Matthew's interest in exile and restoration does contribute to the resolution of the question of 'setting' as corroborating evidence. For one thing, it strengthens the likelihood that Matthew's gospel was written by a Jewish Christian who shared the interest of fellow Jews in the problem of the continuing exile and its resolution. It also suggests that Matthew's envisaged readership were likely to have had strong Jewish associations, though the emphasis on the international consequences of the end of Israel's exile in Jesus should not be ignored. A Gentile readership who were thus enabled to see themselves as beneficiaries of the restoration of Israel, would clearly have valued such a perspective, quite apart from their interest to learn more about Jesus' words and works.

² That the question of the setting of Matthew's gospel is of importance for its interpretation need not be substantiated here (see *inter alia* Stanton, 1992a:71-76; 1992b:379-80). That the subject has been much debated can be seen both from the introductions to the majority of commentaries on Matthew as well as from journal articles which address the issue. Key aspects of and contributions to the discussion have been summarised recently by *inter alia* Senior (1996:7-20).

Closely related to the question of Matthew's setting and its purpose is the issue of the *genre* of Matthew's Gospel. In the preceding discussion I have worked from the premise that Matthew is a modified form of βίος which shared with Mark a particular salvation-historical interest as well - an interest in both *the story* and *the significance* of Jesus³. In this connection, I was particularly struck by Stanton's comments regarding Matthew as εὐαγγέλιον (1992c:1190-95). Stanton argues his position in four ways. First, he answers those such as Davies and Allison (1988:149-154) who propose that the phrase Βίβλος γενέσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Matthew 1:1) should be taken as a title for the whole book rather than the genealogy or other sub-section of the gospel. Second, he locates the historical boundaries for the use of the term τὸ εὐαγγέλιον to describe a 'writing' showing that II Clement, Ignatius and the Didache in all likelihood precede Marcion's usage of the term to describe his version of Luke. Third, he argues that 'while it is true that Mark's development of Paul's use of εὐαγγέλιον paves the way for later reference to the written story of the life of Jesus as a εὐαγγέλιον, Mark did not take that step himself' (1992c:1193). Finally, Stanton analyses the differences in the use of εὐαγγέλιον in Matthew and in Mark. This analysis produces some very striking results, and leads Stanton to the view that the way in which Matthew uses the key word εὐαγγέλιον 'is an important new development' (1992c:1193). The substance of this 'new development' is that the phrase τοῦτο τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας (Matthew 24:14) or simply τοῦτο τὸ εὐαγγέλιον (Matthew 26:13) refers to the gospel that Jesus proclaimed and that Matthew's communities are to proclaim, a gospel with which these communities have become familiar 'on the basis of their acquaintance with his written document'. In other words, says Stanton, the phrase ' "this gospel of the kingdom" is Matthew's own capsule summary of his work' (1992c:1195).⁴

Once again Matthew's interest in exile and restoration acts as corroborating evidence for a conclusion reached on other grounds. In Isaiah 40, a prophecy associated with John the Baptist as the forerunner of Jesus' kingdom proclamation, the prophet announces the forgiveness of sins

³ Cf Stanton (1989:18). Although Stanton has shifted his ground toward a stronger affirmation of the biographical nature of Matthew's gospel (see his comments in Stanton, 1992a:63-64) - a view with which I am in substantial agreement, I still find his initial reference to the *story* and *significance* of Jesus a helpful one when it comes to understanding what Burridge referred to as the 'subgenre' of Matthew and Mark (1992:219).

⁴ Stanton acknowledges here the work of others like Kingsbury and Luz who arrive at a similar conclusion (1992c:1195 note 33).

and the end of hard labour, in other words the end of the exile and the promise of rest for the weary and the burdened. The message about this end of the exile is described there for the first time in terms of 'good news' (Isaiah 40:9-10) - news of the coming kingdom of God. In that context as in Mark and Matthew it has to do with proclamation - with good news preached. But in Matthew in particular, it has the added note of fulfilment. What was promised in Isaiah, has finally come to pass in the person and work of Jesus. What title would one give to a work which centred upon the person of Jesus and his significance as the one who brings an end to the exile? Surely the answer for any one familiar with Isaiah's message would be 'gospel'. And that it would appear is precisely what Matthew has called his book.

It was thus as 'gospel' that Matthew sent forth his βίβλος of Jesus, the one who had by his death saved his people from their sins and brought about the end of their exile. It was as this gospel that Matthew's story of the words and works of Jesus served to comfort, to assure and to instruct a fledgling church in the perplexing and often hostile days of the early expansion of Christianity. It was as gospel that this same story stood as both invitation and warning to those on the outside - first to the Jew but also for the Gentile. It was as gospel that Matthew's book was received, alongside of the other gospels, into the sacred scriptures of the church. And it is as gospel that Matthew's story of Jesus seeks to be heard today - with its same message of comfort, assurance and instruction for those who have come to Jesus, of warning and of invitation for those who have not.

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¹ The 1993 re-publication of Brown's book contains the original (1977) text and a Supplement in which updated ideas and interaction with recent scholarship occurs. To avoid confusion and unnecessary duplication I have used Brown, 1993 and the relevant page number both for quotes from the original 1977 edition and later comments from the supplement.

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